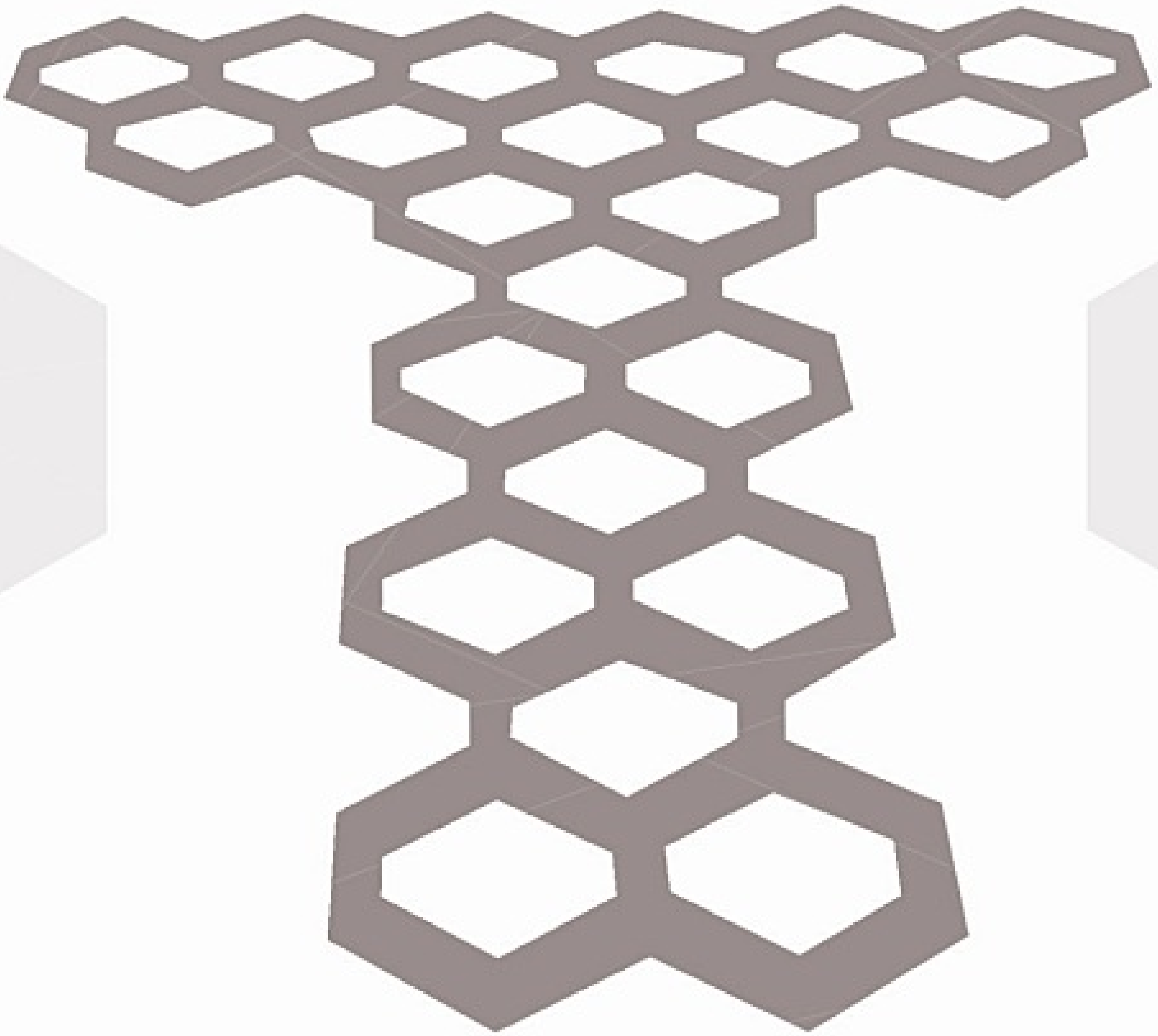
TORCHWOOD

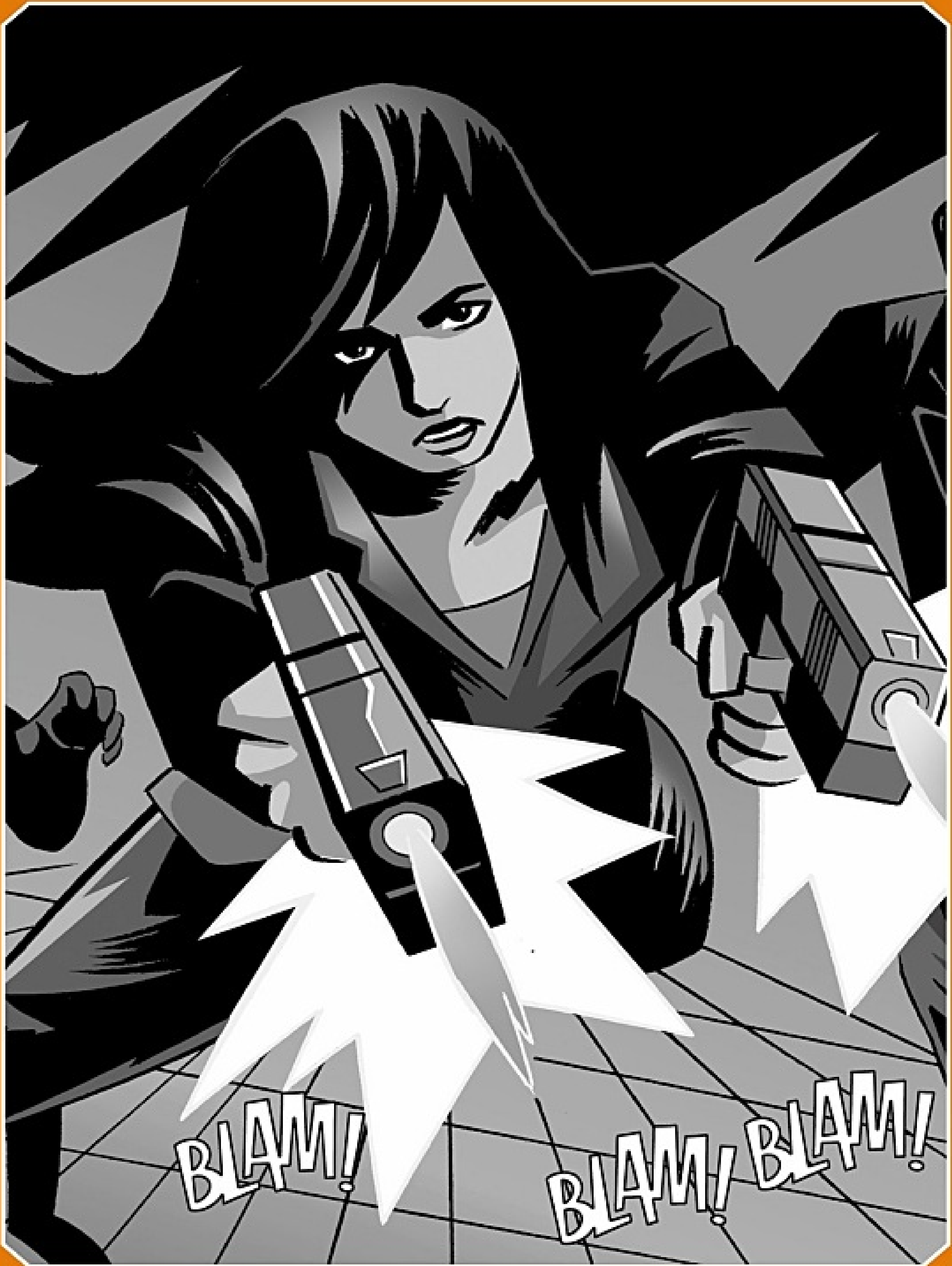
ARCHIVES VOL. 2

TORCHWOOD



ARCHIVES VOL.2

TITAN
COMICS


BLAM!
BLAM! BLAM!
BLAM!

TORCHWOOD

ARCHIVES VOL.2

05 'BROKEN – PART 1'
WRITER: GARY RUSSELL ARTIST: ADRIAN SALMON
LETTERER: JOHN WORKMAN

16 'BROKEN – PART 2'
WRITERS: GARY RUSSELL ARTIST: ADRIAN SALMON
LETTERER: JOHN WORKMAN

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WRITER: NICK ABADZIS ARTIST: PAUL GRIST
COLORIST: PHIL ELLIOTT LETTERER: JOHN WORKMAN

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COLORIST: PHIL ELLIOTT LETTERER: JOHN WORKMAN

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LETTERER: JIM CAMPBELL

86 'REFLECTIONS'
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94 'THE PACKAGE'
WRITER: JAMES GOSS ARTIST: BEN WILLSHER

TORCHWOOD ARCHIVES VOL 2

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TITAN COMICS

COLLECTION EDITOR Neil D. Edwards **SENIOR EDITOR** Martin Eden
COLLECTION DESIGNER Wilfried Tshikana-Ekutshu
SENIOR PRODUCTION CONTROLLER Jackie Flook
PRODUCTION CONTROLLER Peter James
PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR Maria Pearson
ART DIRECTOR Oz Browne **HEAD OF RIGHTS** Jenny Boyce
PUBLISHING MANAGER Darryl Tothill
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR Chris Teather **OPERATIONS DIRECTOR** Leigh Baulch
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For Rights information, contact **Jenny Boyce**
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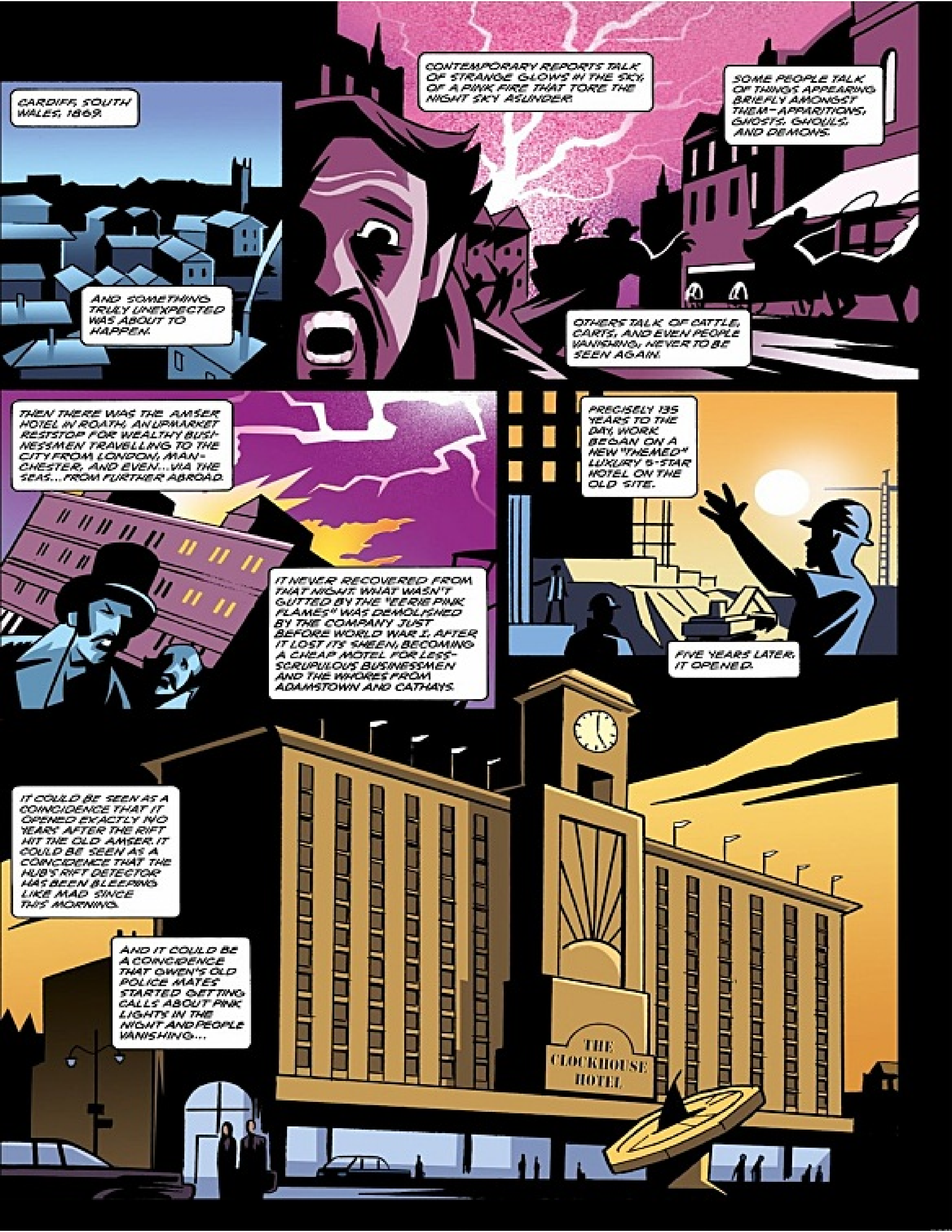
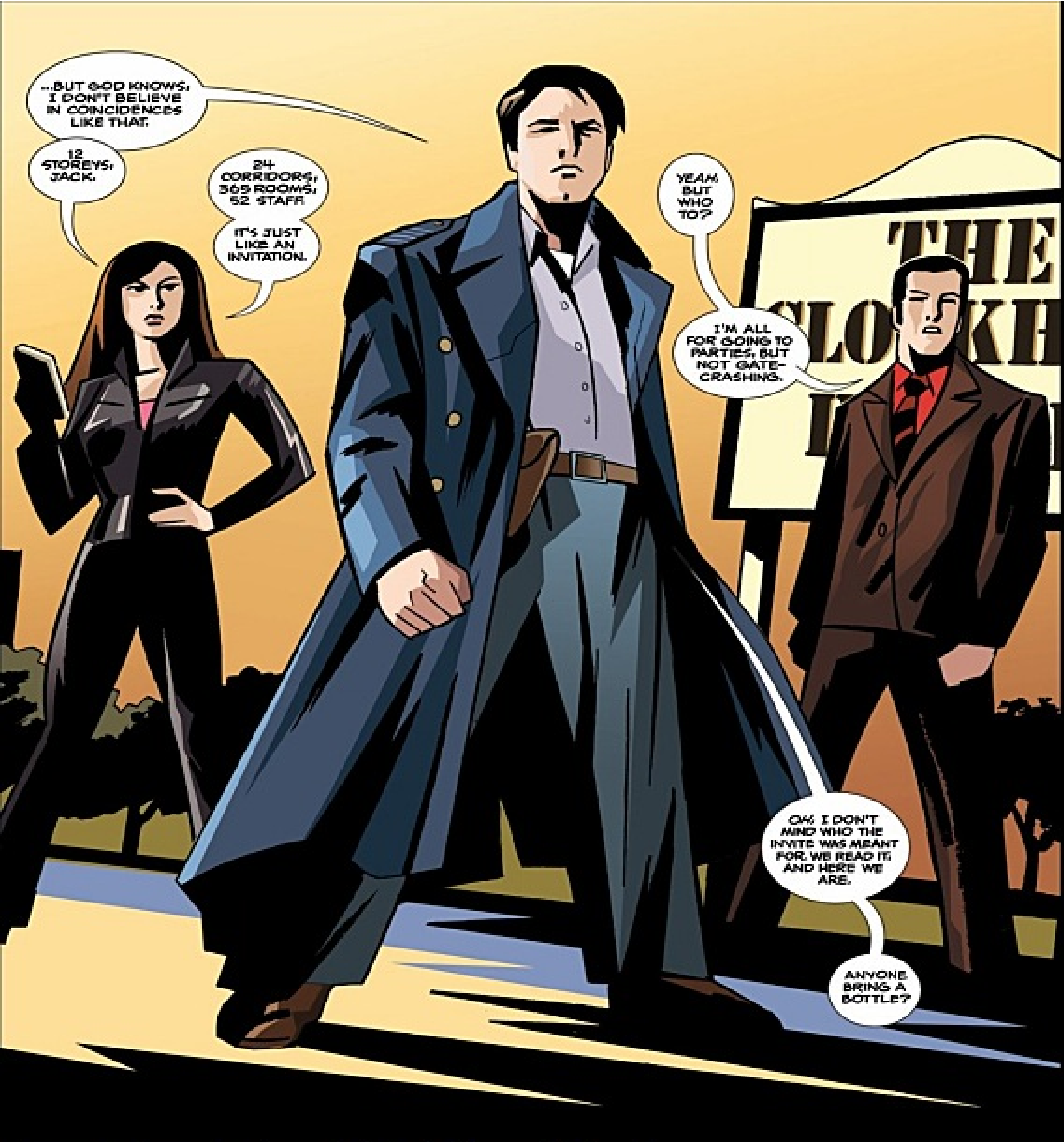
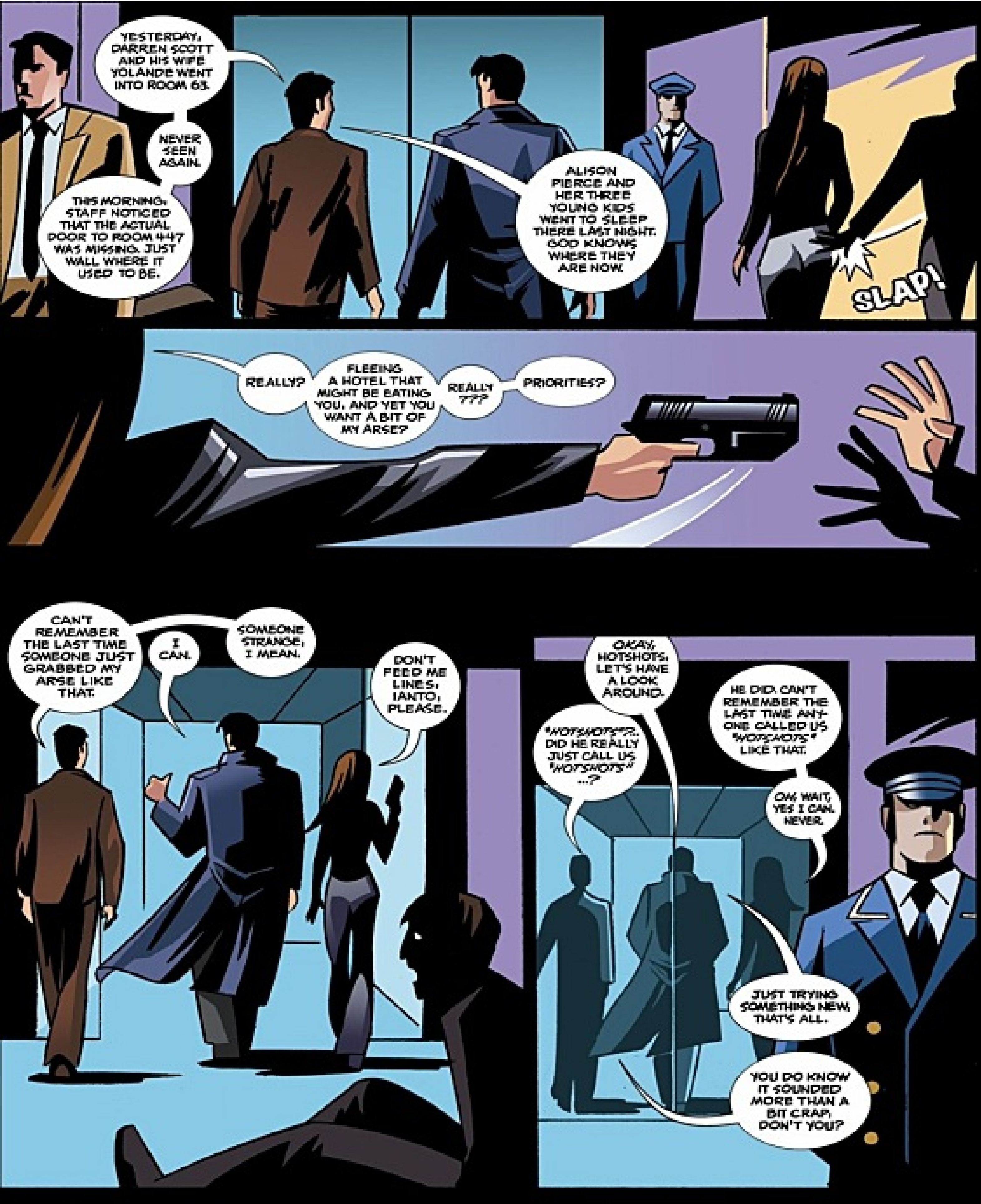

CARDIFF, SOUTH WALES, 1869.
AND SOMETHING TRULY UNEXPECTED WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN.
CONTEMPORARY REPORTS TALK OF STRANGE GLOWS IN THE SKY, OF A PINK FIRE THAT TORE THE NIGHT SKY ASUNDER.
SOME PEOPLE TALK OF THINGS APPEARING BRIEFLY AMONGST THEM—APPARITIONS, GHOSTS, GHOULS, AND DEMONS.
OTHERS TALK OF CATTLE, CARTS, AND EVEN PEOPLE VANISHING, NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN.
THEN THERE WAS THE AMSER HOTEL IN ROATH, AN UPMARKET RESTSTOP FOR WEALTHY BUSINESSMEN TRAVELLING TO THE CITY FROM LONDON, MANCHESTER, AND EVEN...VIA THE SEAS...FROM FURTHER ABROAD.
IT NEVER RECOVERED FROM THAT NIGHT. WHAT WASN'T GUTTED BY THE "EERIE PINK FLAMES" WAS DEMOLISHED BY THE COMPANY JUST BEFORE WORLD WAR I, AFTER IT LOST ITS SHEEN, BECOMING A CHEAP MOTEL FOR LESS-SCRUPULOUS BUSINESSMEN AND THE WHORES FROM ADAMSTOWN AND CATHAYS.
PRECISELY 135 YEARS TO THE DAY, WORK BEGAN ON A NEW "THEMED" LUXURY 5-STAR HOTEL ON THE OLD SITE.
FIVE YEARS LATER, IT OPENED.
IT COULD BE SEEN AS A COINCIDENCE THAT IT OPENED EXACTLY 140 YEARS AFTER THE RIFT HIT THE OLD AMSER. IT COULD BE SEEN AS A COINCIDENCE THAT THE HUB'S RIFT DETECTOR HAS BEEN BLEEPING LIKE MAD SINCE THIS MORNING.
AND IT COULD BE A COINCIDENCE THAT OWEN'S OLD POLICE MATES STARTED GETTING CALLS ABOUT PINK LIGHTS IN THE NIGHT AND PEOPLE VANISHING...
THE CLOCKHOUSE HOTEL

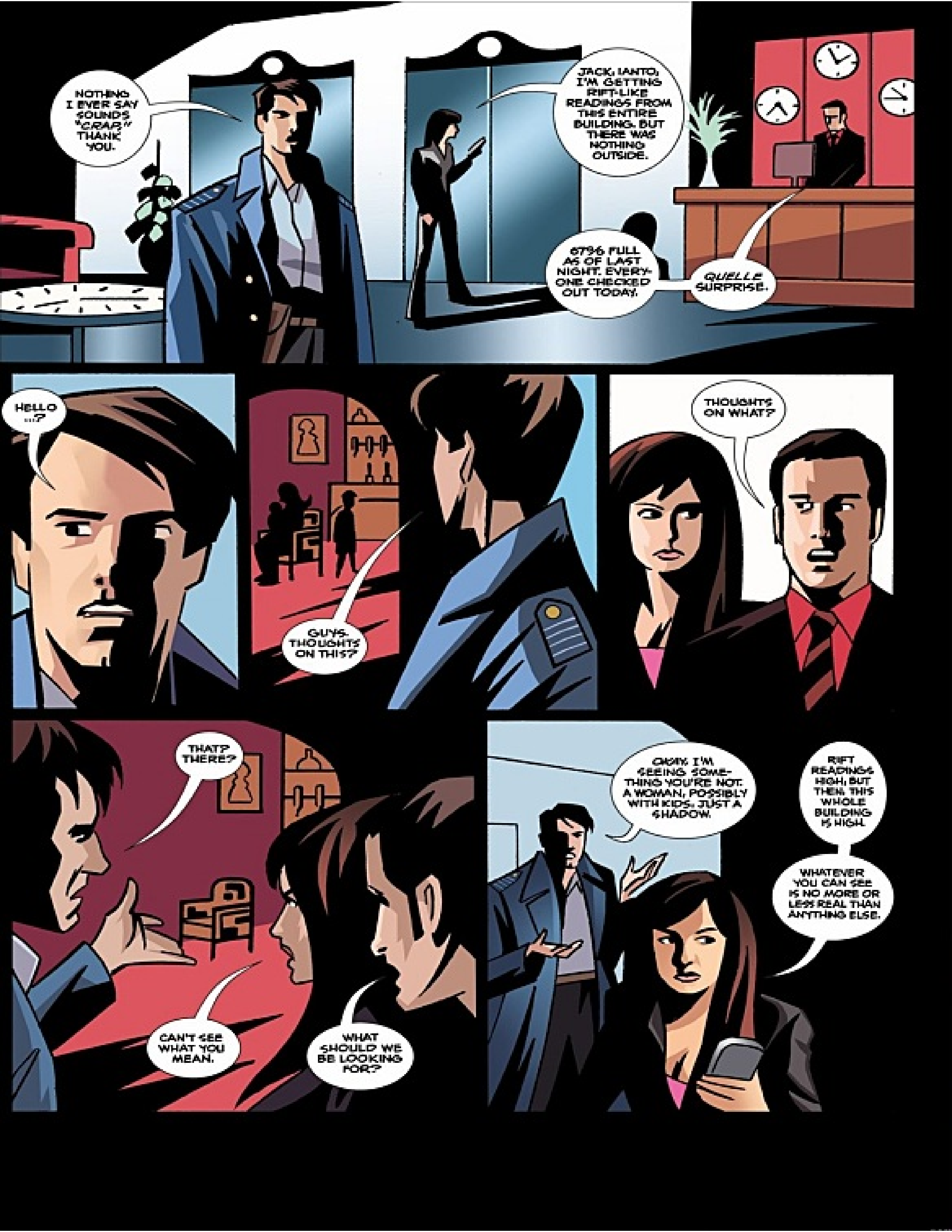

...BUT GOD KNOWS, I DON'T BELIEVE IN COINCIDENCES LIKE THAT.
12 STOREYS, JACK.
24 CORRIDORS, 365 ROOMS, 52 STAFF.
IT'S JUST LIKE AN INVITATION.
YEAH, BUT WHO TO?
I'M ALL FOR GOING TO PARTIES, BUT NOT GATE-CRASHING.
THE
OH, I DON'T MIND WHO THE INVITE WAS MEANT FOR. WE READ IT, AND HERE WE ARE.
ANYONE BRING A BOTTLE?

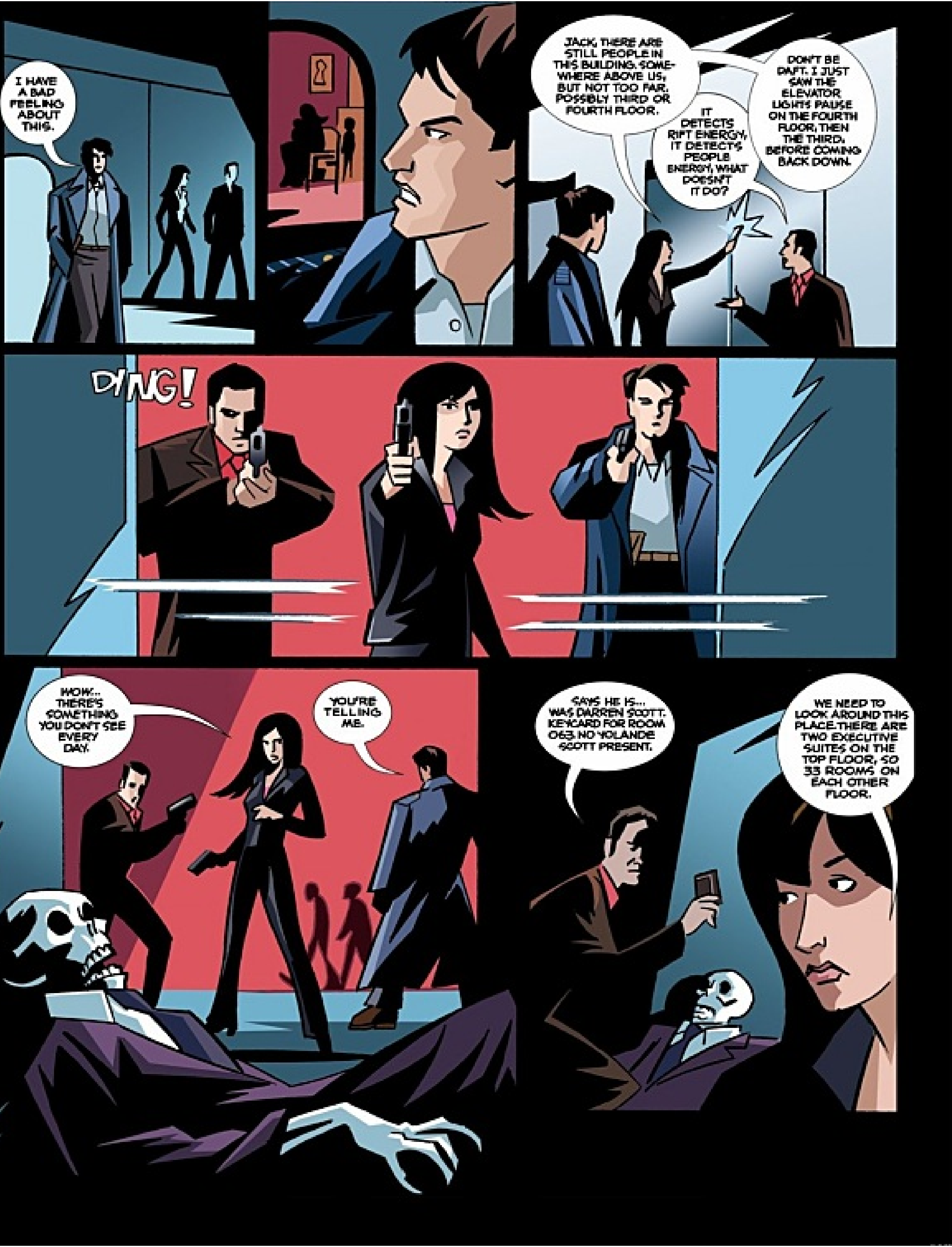
BROKEN

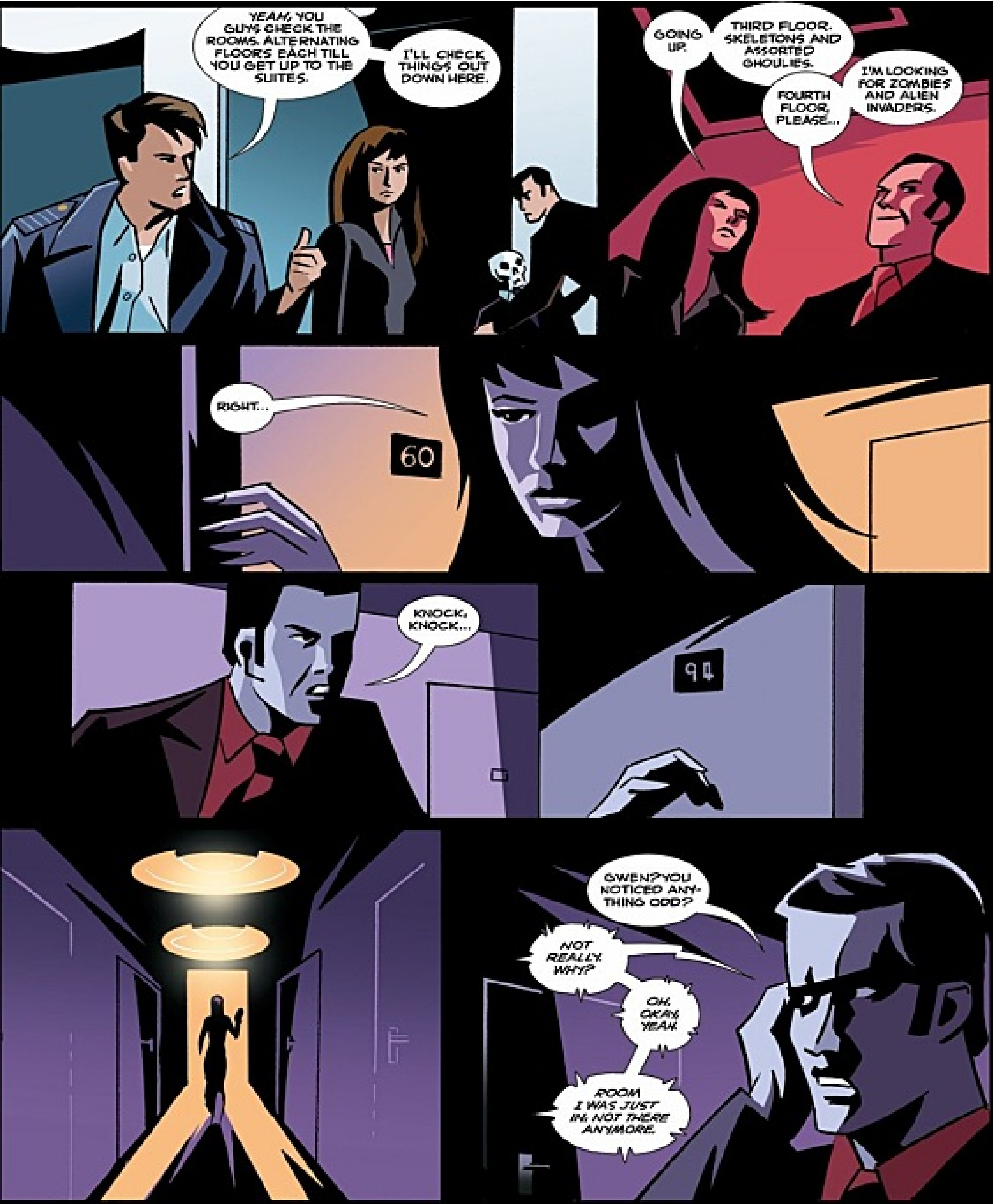
PART 1 OF 5

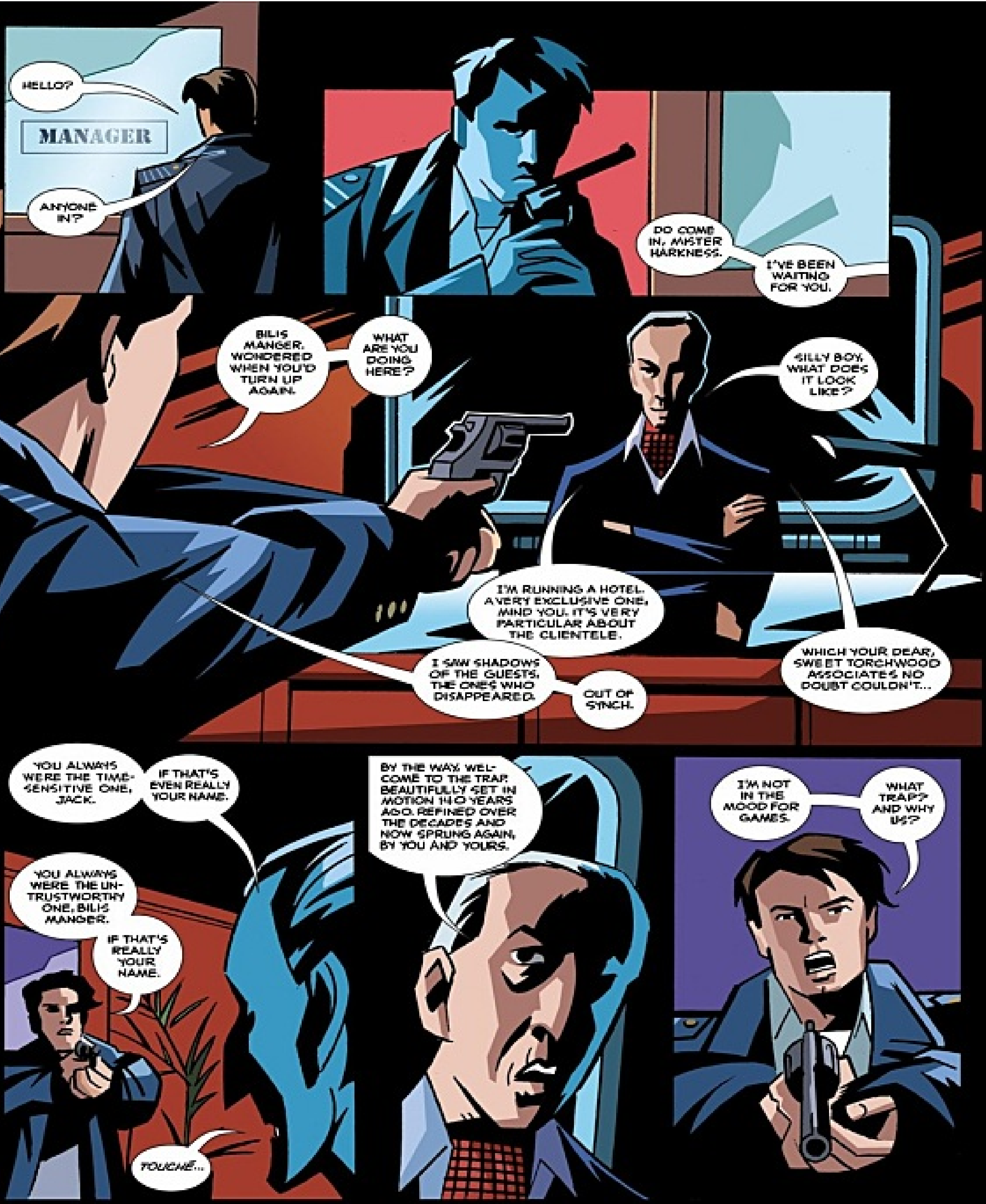
WRITTEN BY GARY RUSSELL • ARTWORK BY ADRIAN SALMON • LETTERING BY JOHN WORKMAN

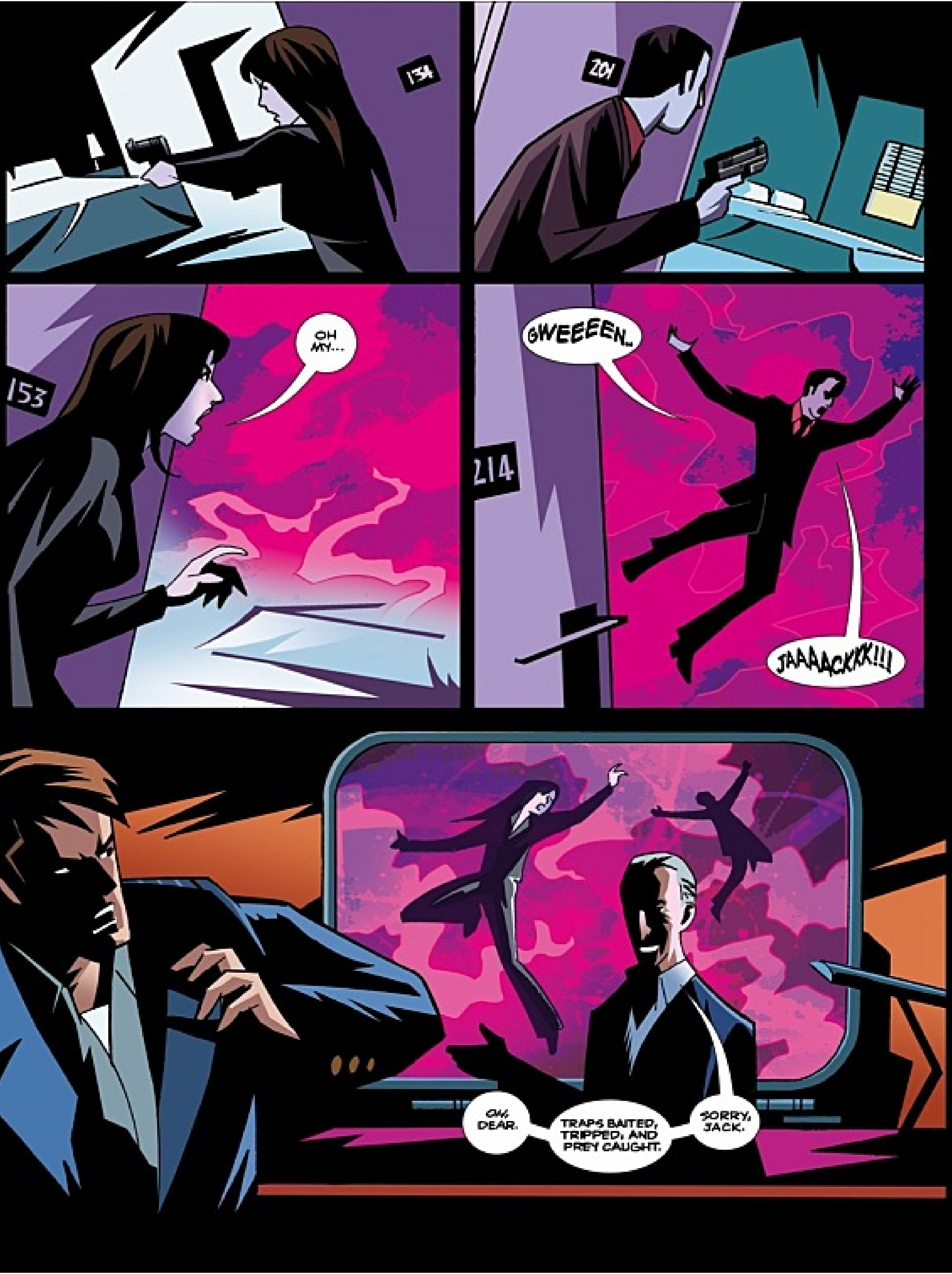

YESTERDAY, DARREN SCOTT AND HIS WIFE YOLANDE WENT INTO ROOM 63.
NEVER SEEN AGAIN.
THIS MORNING, STAFF NOTICED THAT THE ACTUAL DOOR TO ROOM 447 WAS MISSING. JUST WALL WHERE IT USED TO BE.
ALISON PIERCE AND HER THREE YOUNG KIDS WENT TO SLEEP THERE LAST NIGHT. GOD KNOWS WHERE THEY ARE NOW.
SLAP!
REALLY?
FLEEING A HOTEL THAT MIGHT BE EATING YOU, AND YET YOU WANT A BIT OF MY ARSE?
REALLY ???
PRIORITIES?
CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME SOMEONE JUST GRABBED MY ARSE LIKE THAT.
I CAN.
SOMEONE STRANGE, I MEAN.
DON'T FEED ME LINES, IANTO, PLEASE.
OKAY, HOTSHOTS, LET'S HAVE A LOOK AROUND.
"HOTSHOTS"?! DID HE REALLY JUST CALL US *"HOTSHOTS"* ...?
HE DID. CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME ANYONE CALLED US *"HOTSHOTS"* LIKE THAT.
OH, WAIT, YES I CAN. NEVER.
JUST TRYING SOMETHING NEW, THAT'S ALL.
YOU DO KNOW IT SOUNDED MORE THAN A BIT CRAP, DON'T YOU?

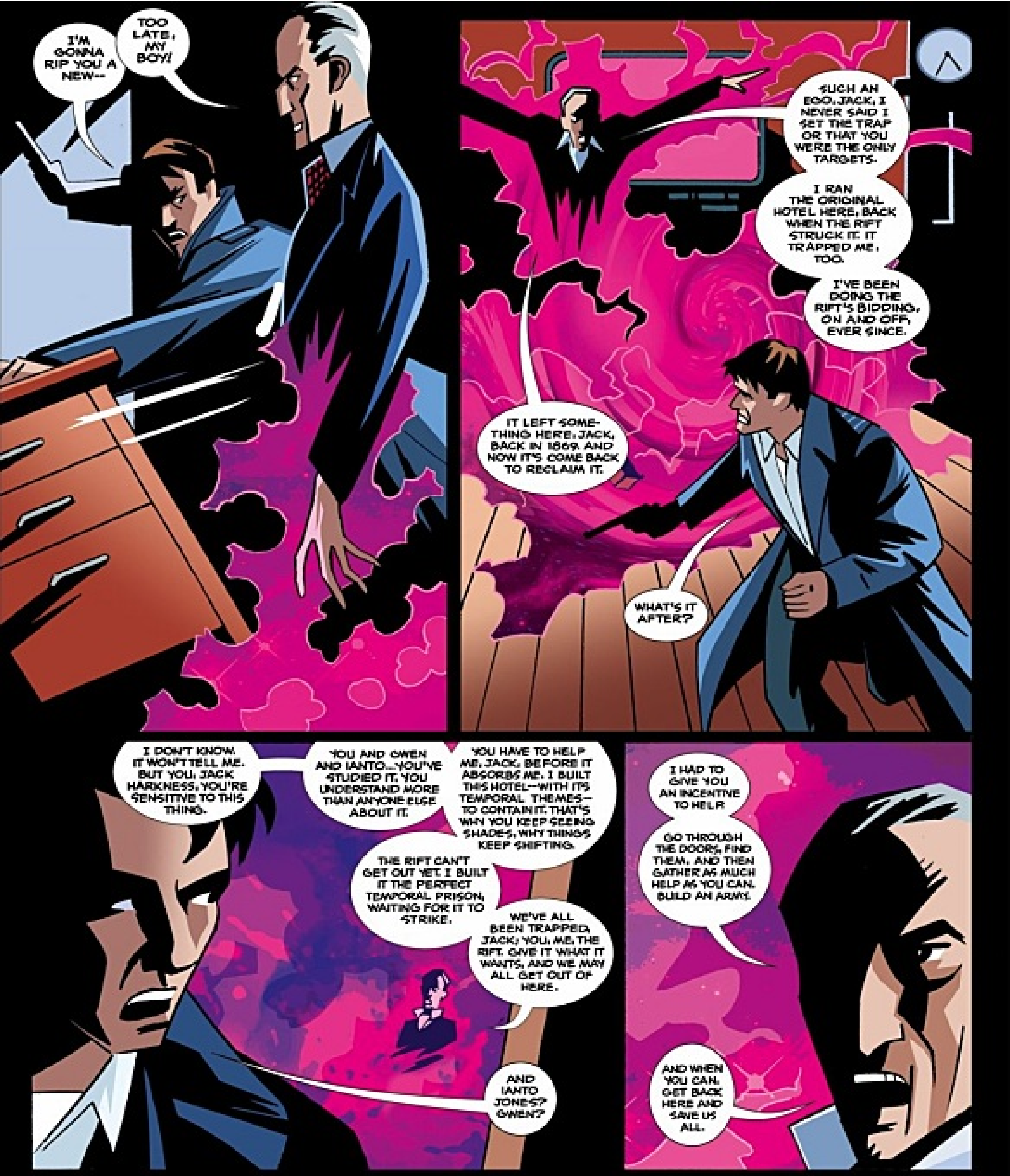

NOTHING I EVER SAY SOUNDS "CRAP," THANK YOU.
JACK, IANTO, I'M GETTING RIFT-LIKE READINGS FROM THIS ENTIRE BUILDING. BUT THERE WAS NOTHING OUTSIDE.
6796 FULL AS OF LAST NIGHT. EVERYONE CHECKED OUT TODAY.
QUELLE SURPRISE.
HELLO ...?
GUYS. THOUGHTS ON THIS?
THOUGHTS ON WHAT?
THAT? THERE?
CAN'T SEE WHAT YOU MEAN.
WHAT SHOULD WE BE LOOKING FOR?
OKAY. I'M SEEING SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT. A WOMAN, POSSIBLY WITH KIDS. JUST A SHADOW.
RIFT READINGS HIGH, BUT THEN, THIS WHOLE BUILDING IS HIGH.
WHATEVER YOU CAN SEE IS NO MORE OR LESS REAL THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

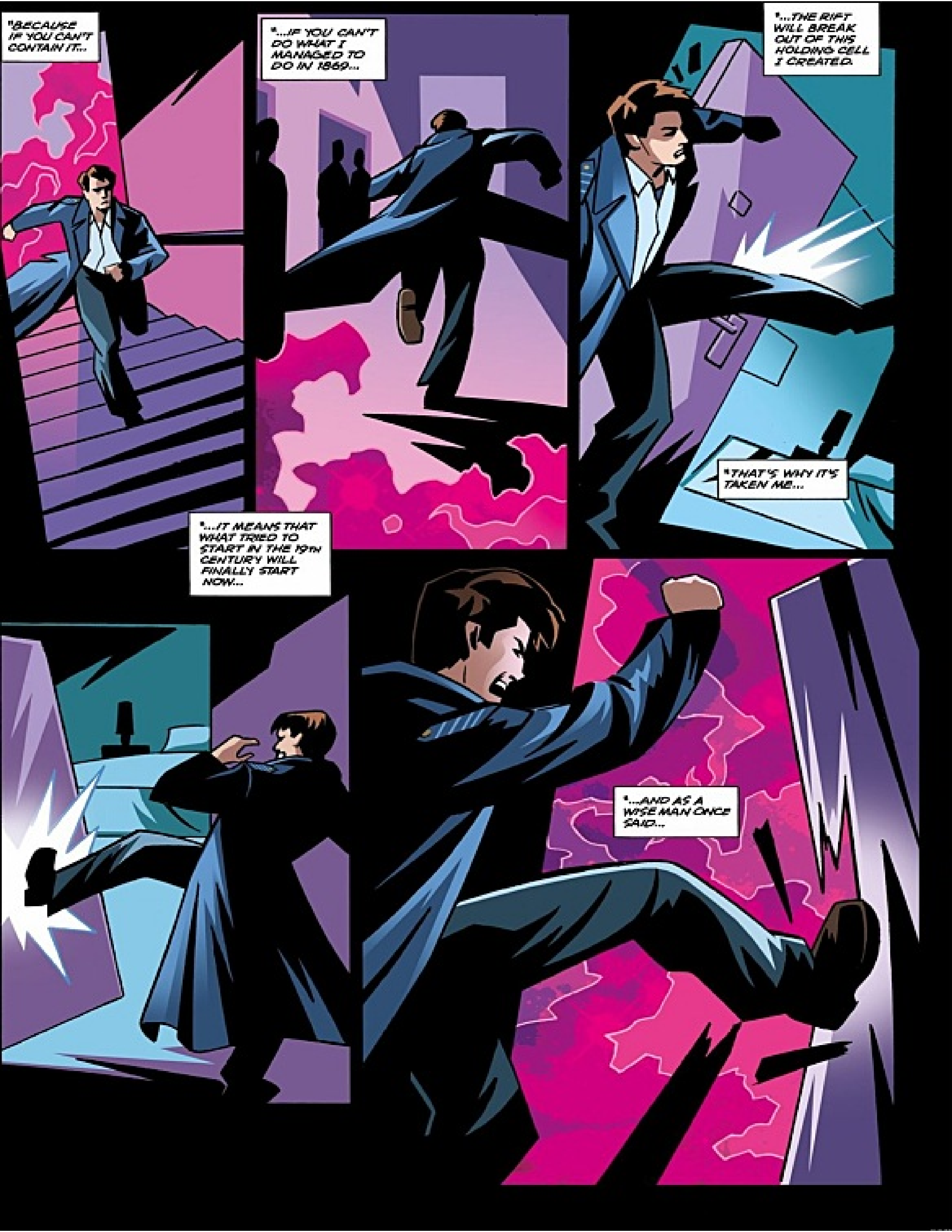

I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.
JACK, THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE IN THIS BUILDING. SOMEWHERE ABOVE US, BUT NOT TOO FAR. POSSIBLY THIRD OR FOURTH FLOOR.
IT DETECTS RIFT ENERGY, IT DETECTS PEOPLE ENERGY, WHAT DOESN'T IT DO?
DON'T BE DAFT. I JUST SAW THE ELEVATOR LIGHTS PAUSE ON THE FOURTH FLOOR, THEN THE THIRD, BEFORE COMING BACK DOWN.
DING!
WOW... THERE'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T SEE EVERY DAY.
YOU'RE TELLING ME.
SAYS HE IS... WAS DARREN SCOTT. KEYCARD FOR ROOM 063. NO YOLANDE SCOTT PRESENT.
WE NEED TO LOOK AROUND THIS PLACE. THERE ARE TWO EXECUTIVE SUITES ON THE TOP FLOOR, SO 33 ROOMS ON EACH OTHER FLOOR.

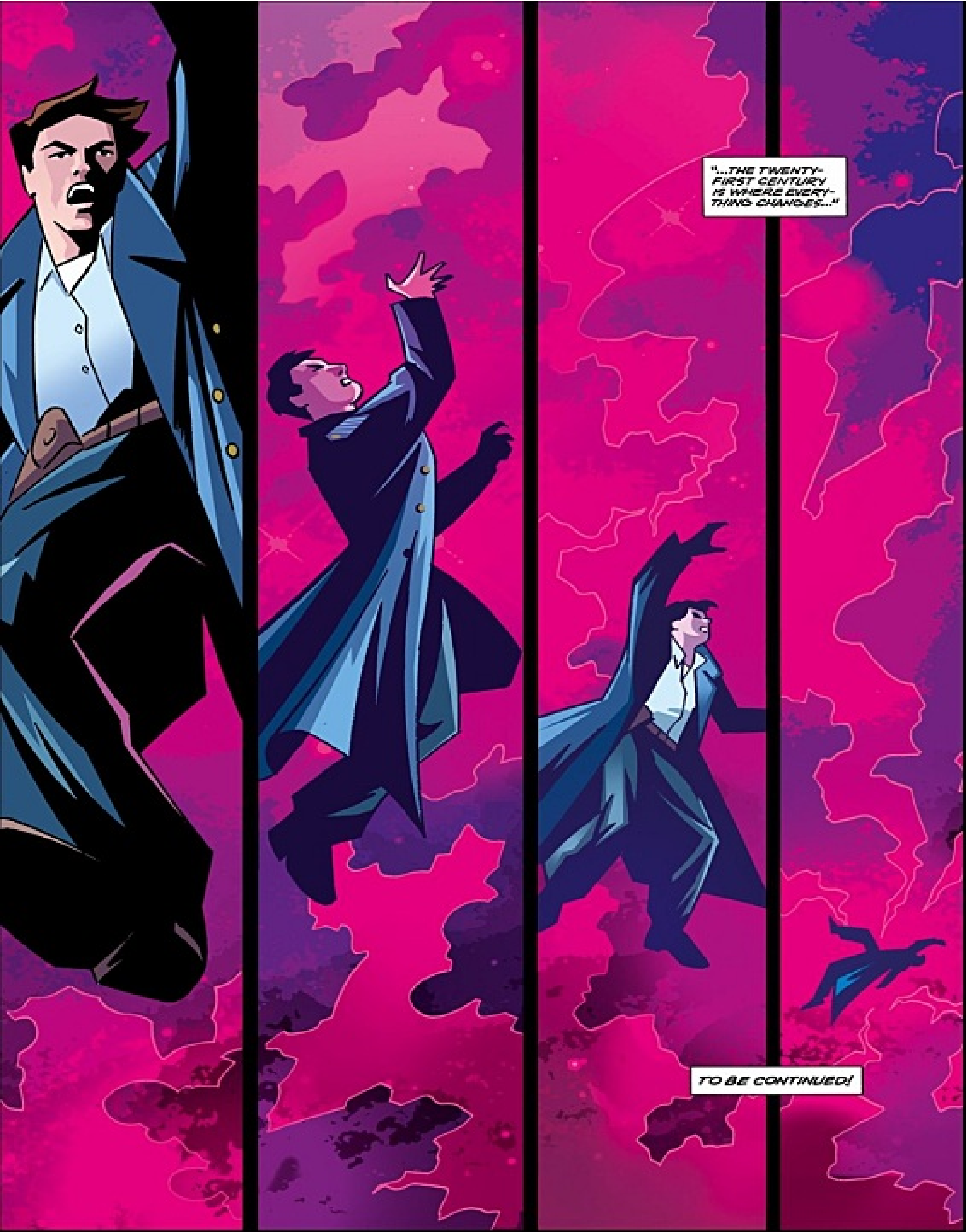

YEAH, YOU GUYS CHECK THE ROOMS. ALTERNATING FLOORS EACH TILL YOU GET UP TO THE SUITES.
I'LL CHECK THINGS OUT DOWN HERE.
GOING UP.
THIRD FLOOR. SKELETONS AND ASSORTED GHOULIES.
I'M LOOKING FOR ZOMBIES AND ALIEN INVADERS.
FOURTH FLOOR, PLEASE...
RIGHT...
60
KNOCK, KNOCK...
94
GWEN? YOU NOTICED ANYTHING ODD?
NOT REALLY. WHY?
OH. OKAY. YEAH.
ROOM I WAS JUST IN. NOT THERE ANYMORE.

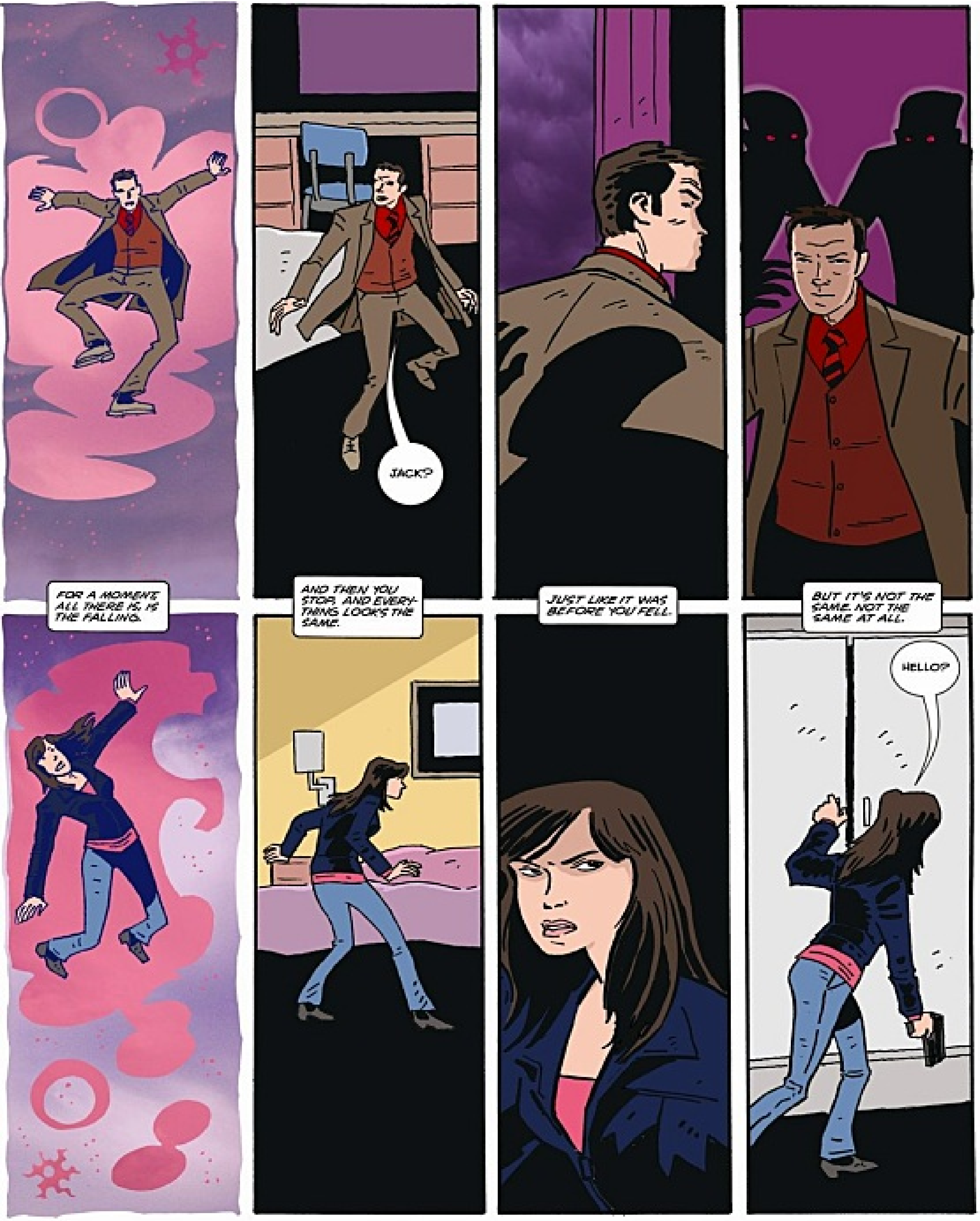

HELLO?
MANAGER
ANYONE IN?
DO COME IN, MISTER HARKNESS.
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.
BILIS MANGER. WONDERED WHEN YOU'D TURN UP AGAIN.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
SILLY BOY. WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?
I'M RUNNING A HOTEL. A VERY EXCLUSIVE ONE, MIND YOU. IT'S VERY PARTICULAR ABOUT THE CLIENTELE.
WHICH YOUR DEAR, SWEET TORCHWOOD ASSOCIATES NO DOUBT COULDN'T...
I SAW SHADOWS OF THE GUESTS. THE ONES WHO DISAPPEARED.
OUT OF SYNCH.
YOU ALWAYS WERE THE TIME-SENSITIVE ONE, JACK.
IF THAT'S EVEN REALLY YOUR NAME.
YOU ALWAYS WERE THE UNTRUSTWORTHY ONE, BILIS MANGER.
IF THAT'S REALLY YOUR NAME.
TOUCHÉ...
BY THE WAY, WELCOME TO THE TRAP. BEAUTIFULLY SET IN MOTION 140 YEARS AGO. REFINED OVER THE DECADES AND NOW SPRUNG AGAIN, BY YOU AND YOURS.
I'M NOT IN THE MOOD FOR GAMES.
WHAT TRAP? AND WHY US?

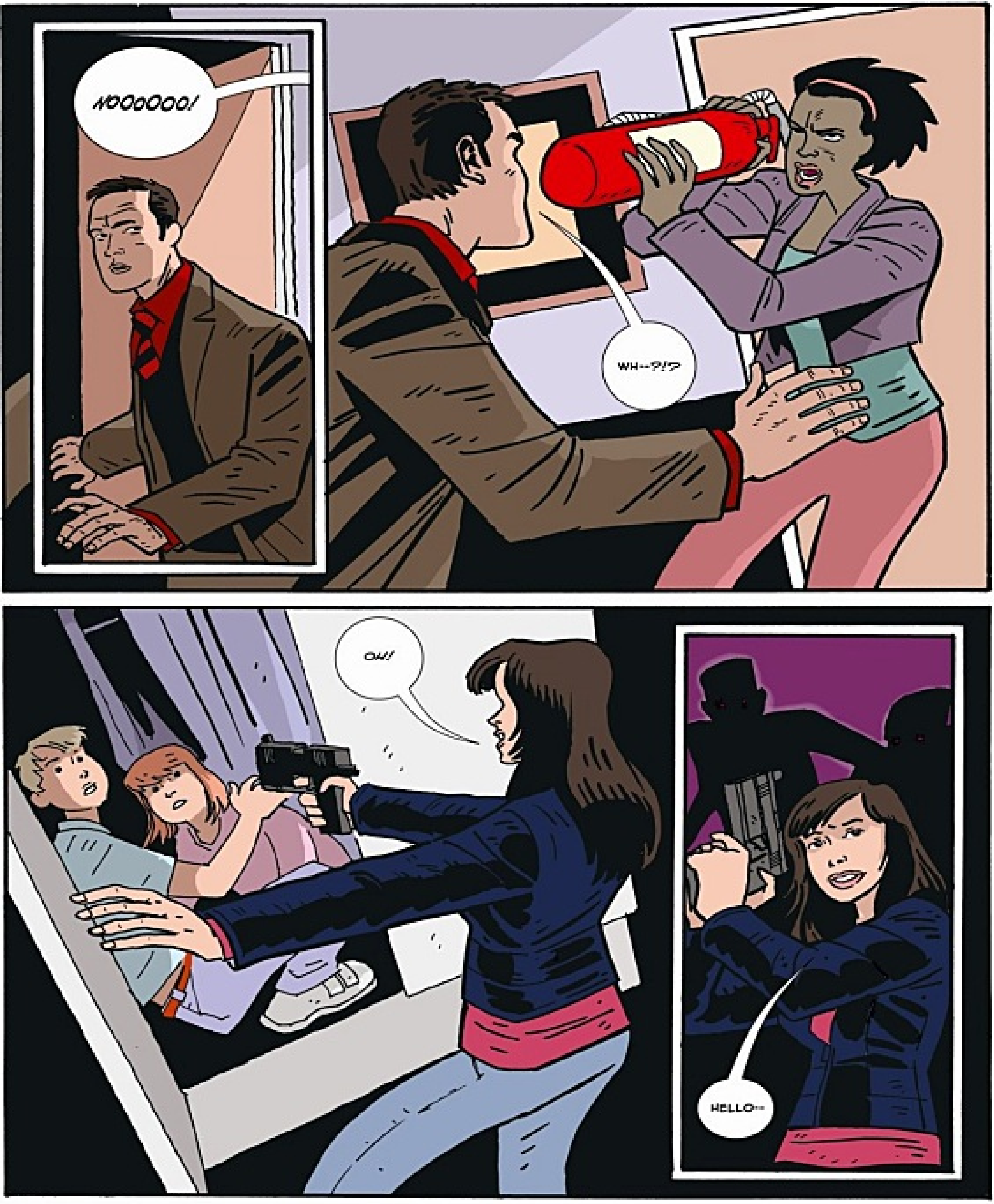

134
201
153
OH MY...
GWEEEEN..
214
JAAAACKKK!!!
OH, DEAR.
TRAPS BAITED, TRIPPED, AND PREY CAUGHT.
SORRY, JACK.

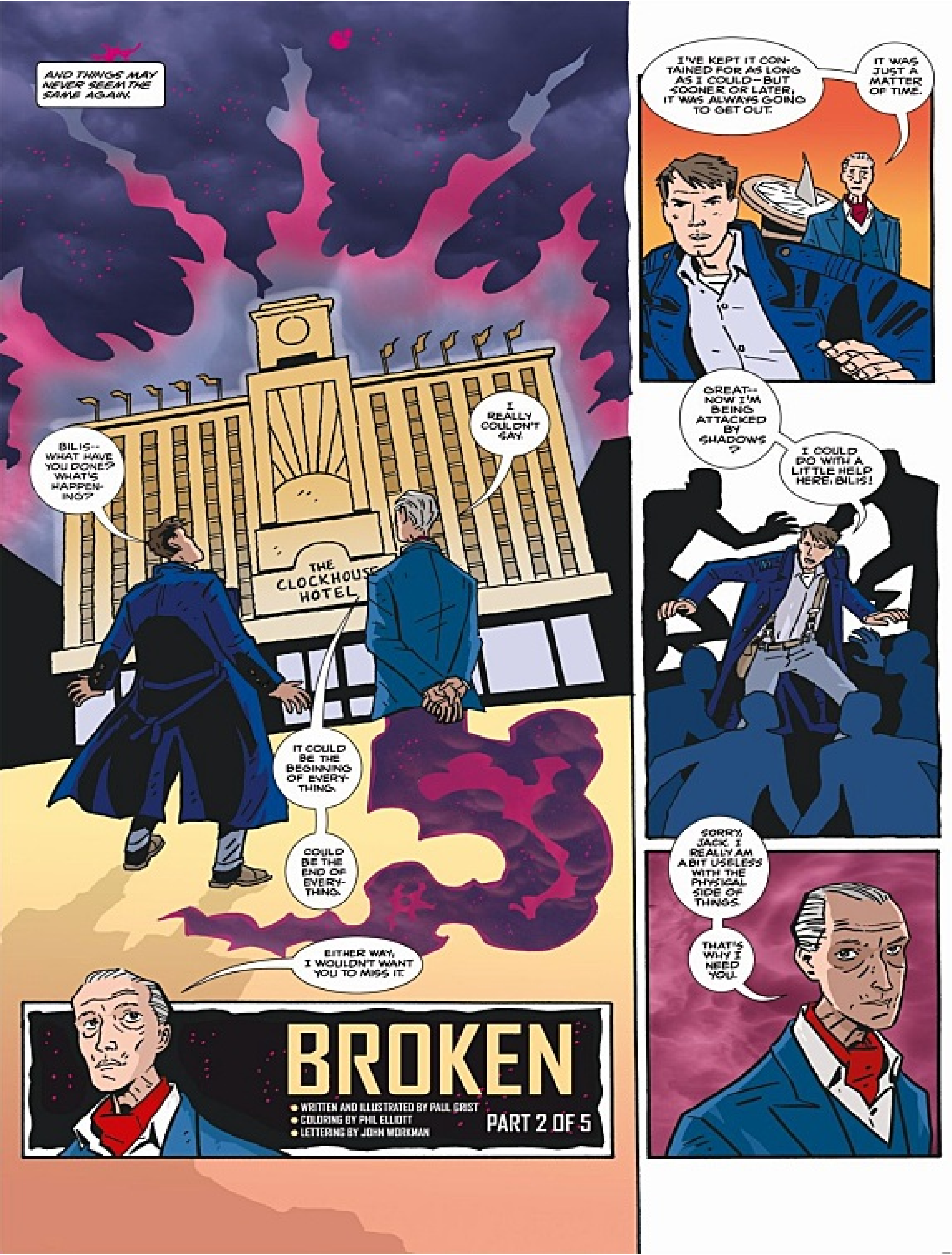

I'M GONNA RIP YOU A NEW--
TOO LATE, MY BOY!
SUCH AN EGO, JACK. I NEVER SAID I SET THE TRAP OR THAT YOU WERE THE ONLY TARGETS.
I RAN THE ORIGINAL HOTEL HERE, BACK WHEN THE RIFT STRUCK IT. IT TRAPPED ME, TOO.
I'VE BEEN DOING THE RIFT'S BIDDING, ON AND OFF, EVER SINCE.
IT LEFT SOMETHING HERE, JACK, BACK IN 1869. AND NOW IT'S COME BACK TO RECLAIM IT.
WHAT'S IT AFTER?
I DON'T KNOW. IT WON'T TELL ME. BUT YOU, JACK HARKNESS, YOU'RE SENSITIVE TO THIS THING.
YOU AND GWEN AND IANTO... YOU'VE STUDIED IT. YOU UNDERSTAND MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE ABOUT IT.
YOU HAVE TO HELP ME, JACK, BEFORE IT ABSORBS ME. I BUILT THIS HOTEL--WITH ITS TEMPORAL THEMES--TO CONTAIN IT. THAT'S WHY YOU KEEP SEEING SHADES, WHY THINGS KEEP SHIFTING.
THE RIFT CAN'T GET OUT YET. I BUILT IT THE PERFECT TEMPORAL PRISON, WAITING FOR IT TO STRIKE.
WE'VE ALL BEEN TRAPPED, JACK; YOU, ME, THE RIFT. GIVE IT WHAT IT WANTS, AND WE MAY ALL GET OUT OF HERE.
AND IANTO JONES? GWEN?
I HAD TO GIVE YOU AN INCENTIVE TO HELP.
GO THROUGH THE DOORS, FIND THEM, AND THEN GATHER AS MUCH HELP AS YOU CAN. BUILD AN ARMY.
AND WHEN YOU CAN, GET BACK HERE AND SAVE US ALL.


"BECAUSE IF YOU CAN'T CONTAIN IT...
"...IF YOU CAN'T DO WHAT I MANAGED TO DO IN 1869...
"...THE RIFT WILL BREAK OUT OF THIS HOLDING CELL I CREATED.
"THAT'S WHY IT'S TAKEN ME...
"...IT MEANS THAT WHAT TRIED TO START IN THE 19TH CENTURY WILL FINALLY START NOW...
"...AND AS A WISE MAN ONCE SAID...


"...THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY IS WHERE EVERYTHING CHANGES..."
TO BE CONTINUED!


JACK?
FOR A MOMENT, ALL THERE IS, IS THE FALLING.
AND THEN YOU STOP, AND EVERYTHING LOOK'S THE SAME.
JUST LIKE IT WAS BEFORE YOU FELL.
BUT IT'S NOT THE SAME. NOT THE SAME AT ALL.
HELLO?

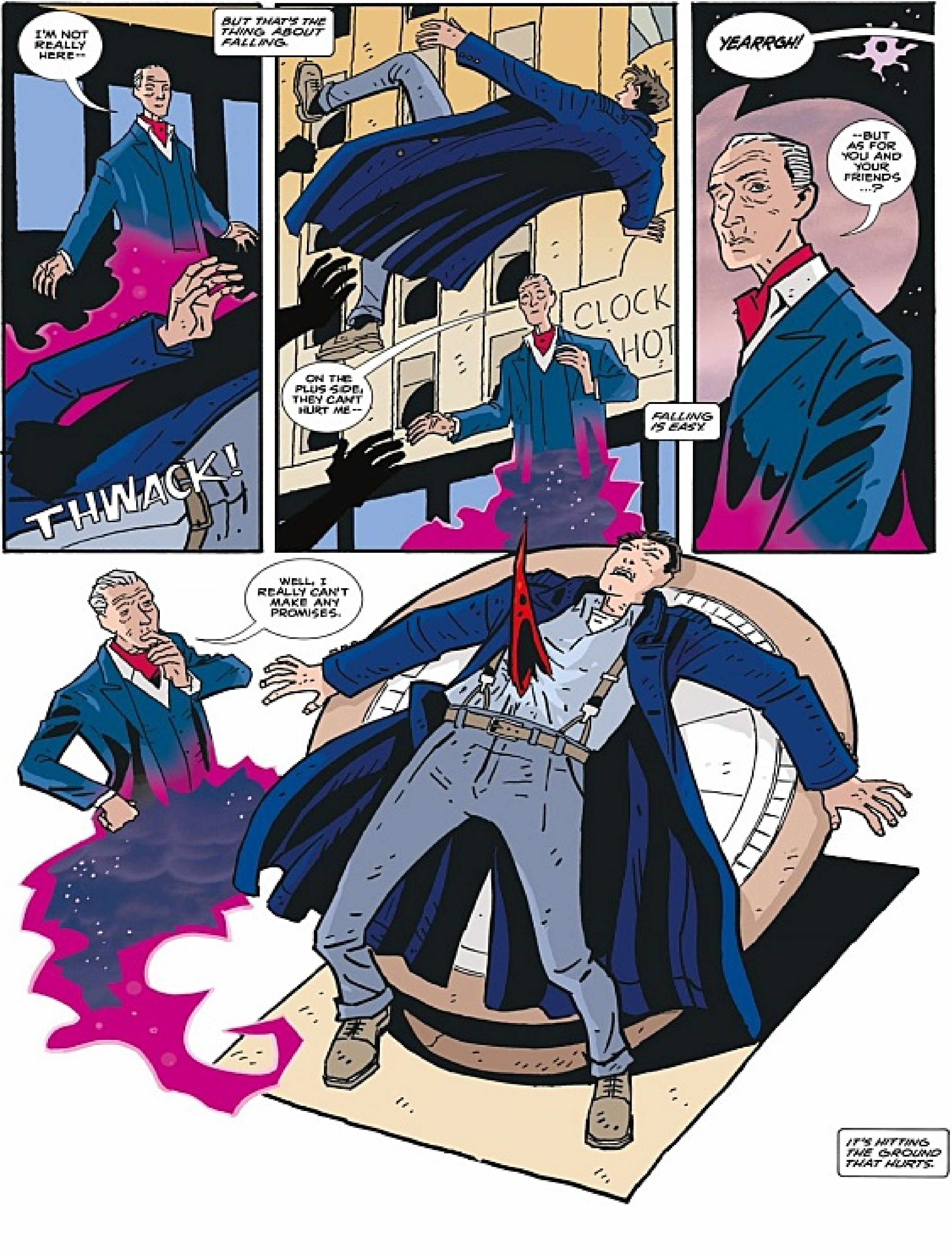

NOOOOOO!
WH--?!?
OH!
HELLO--

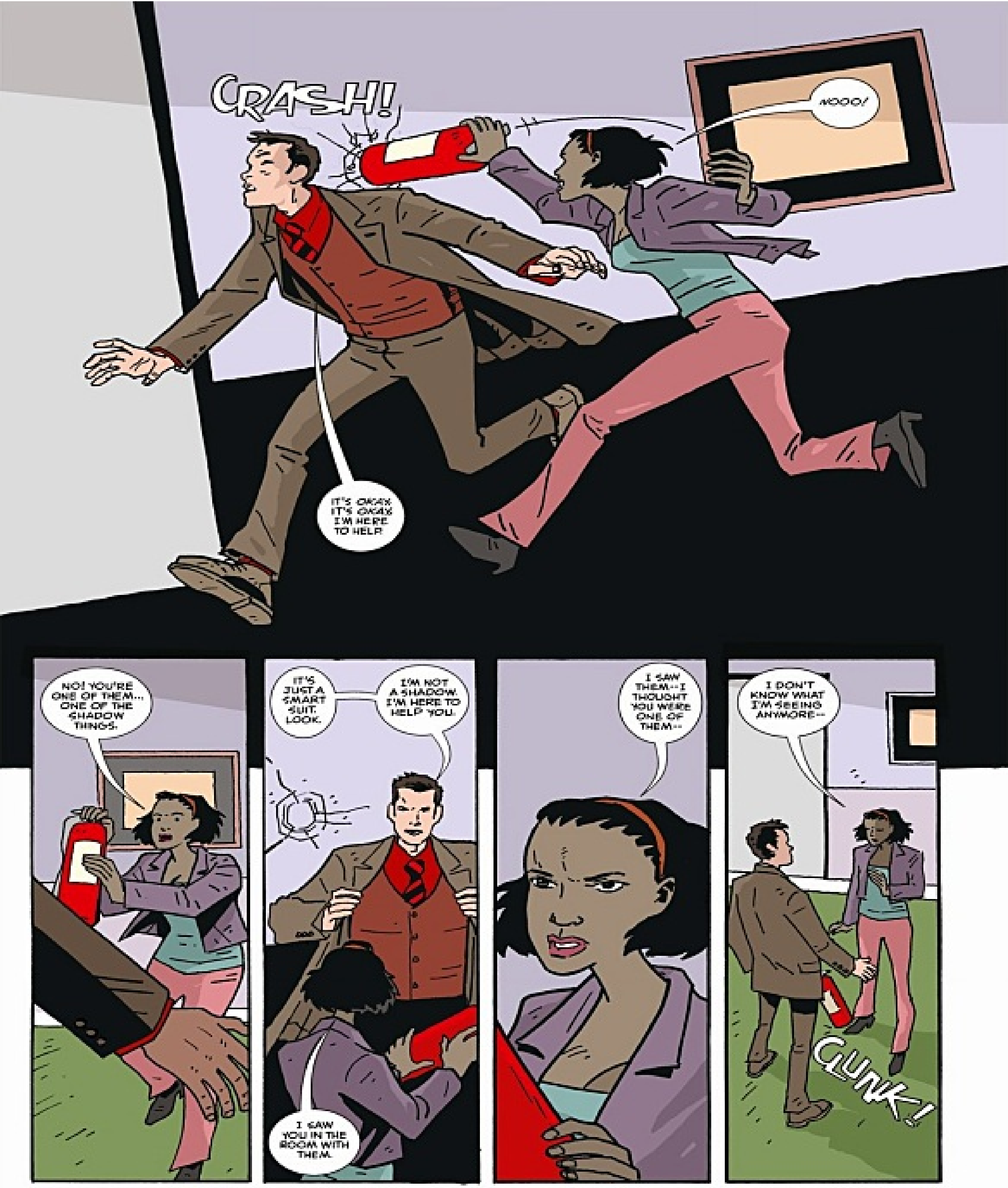

AND THINGS MAY NEVER SEEM THE SAME AGAIN.
BILIS-- WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? WHAT'S HAPPENING?
I REALLY COULDN'T SAY.
THE CLOCKHOUSE HOTEL
IT COULD BE THE BEGINNING OF EVERYTHING.
COULD BE THE END OF EVERYTHING.
EITHER WAY, I WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO MISS IT.
I'VE KEPT IT CONTAINED FOR AS LONG AS I COULD-- BUT SOONER OR LATER, IT WAS ALWAYS GOING TO GET OUT.
IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME.
GREAT-- NOW I'M BEING ATTACKED BY SHADOWS?
I COULD DO WITH A LITTLE HELP HERE, BILIS!
SORRY, JACK. I REALLY AM A BIT USELESS WITH THE PHYSICAL SIDE OF THINGS.
THAT'S WHY I NEED YOU.

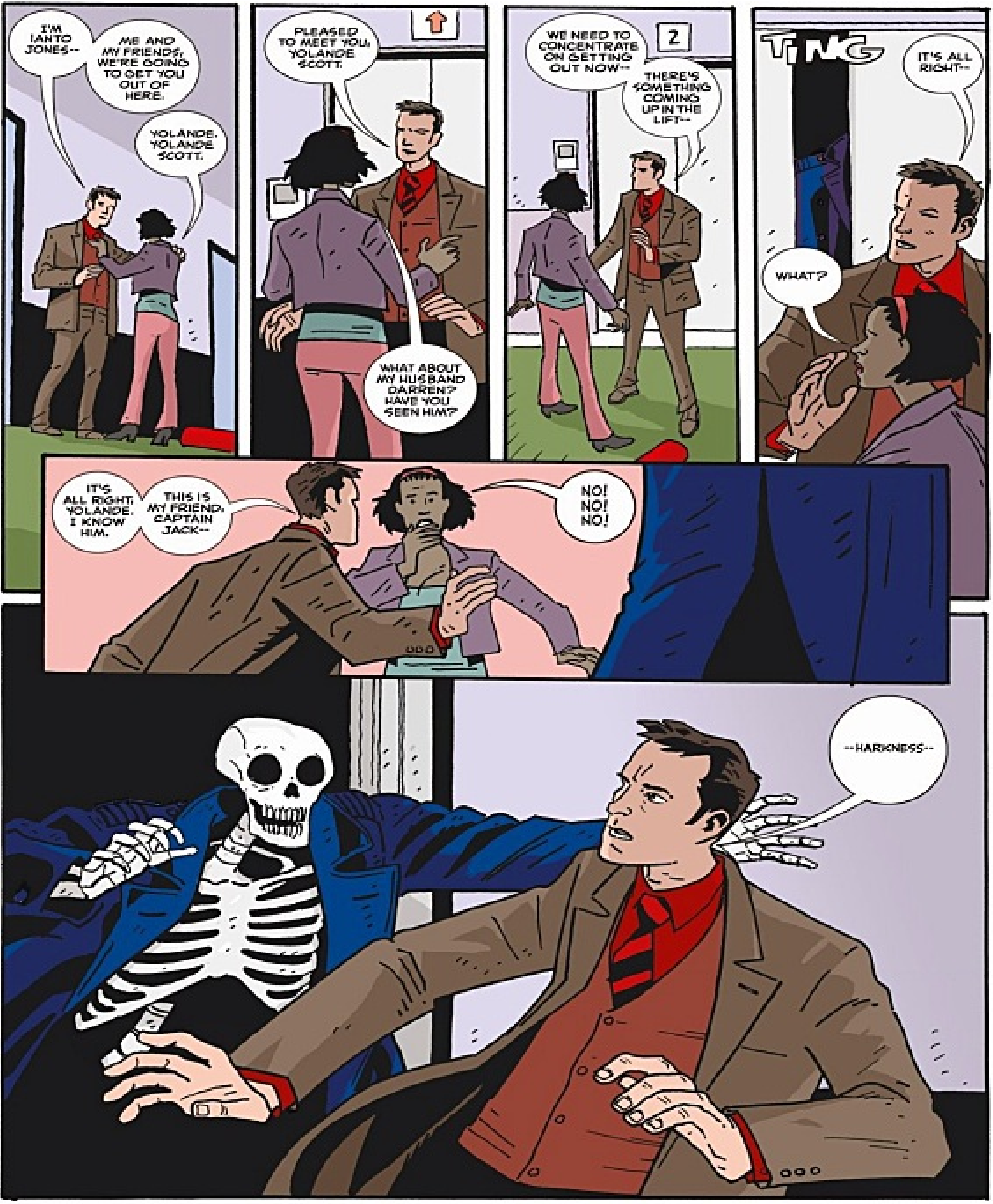
BROKEN

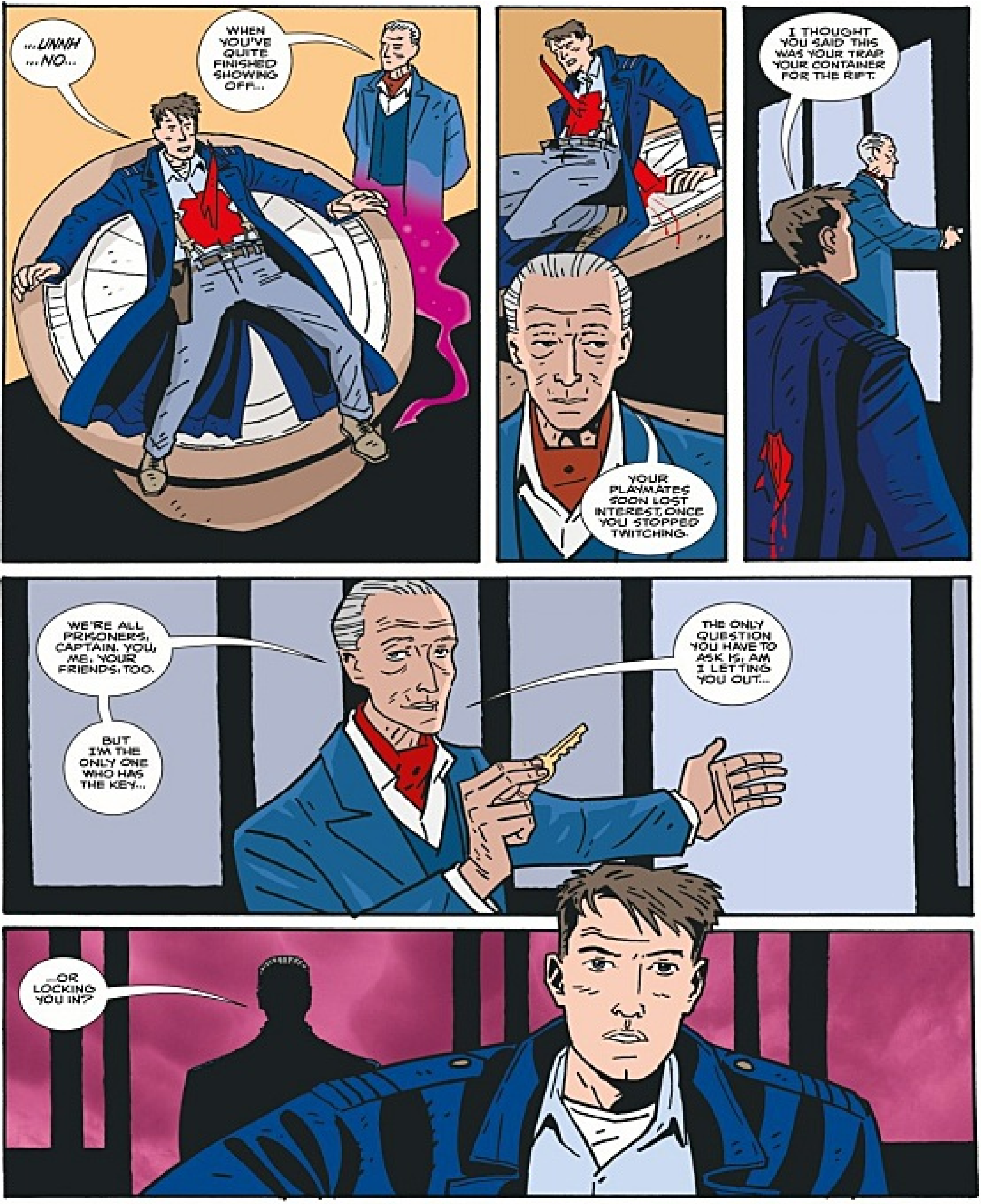
- WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL GRIST
- COLORING BY PHIL ELLIOTT
- LETTERING BY JOHN WORKMAN

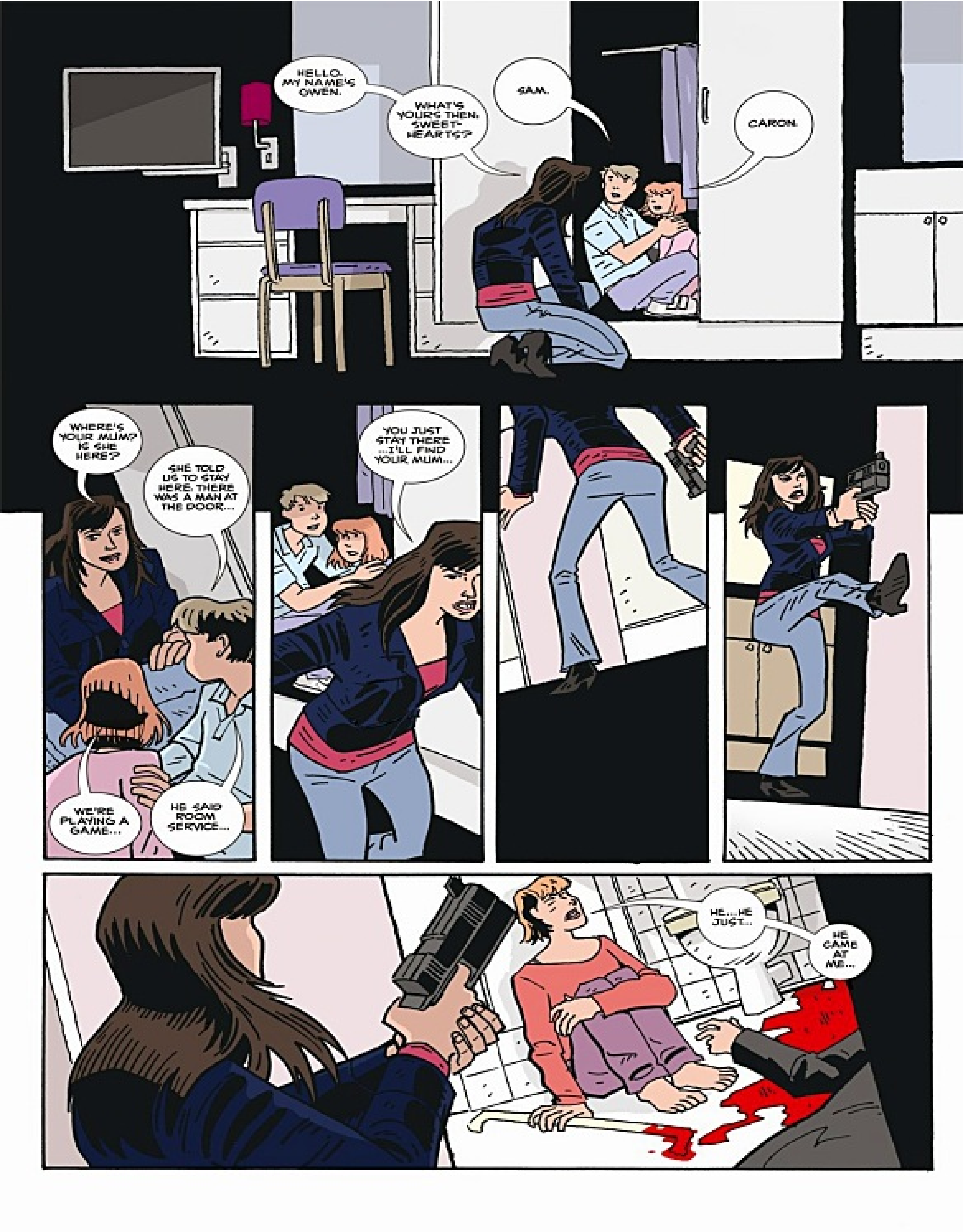
PART 2 OF 5

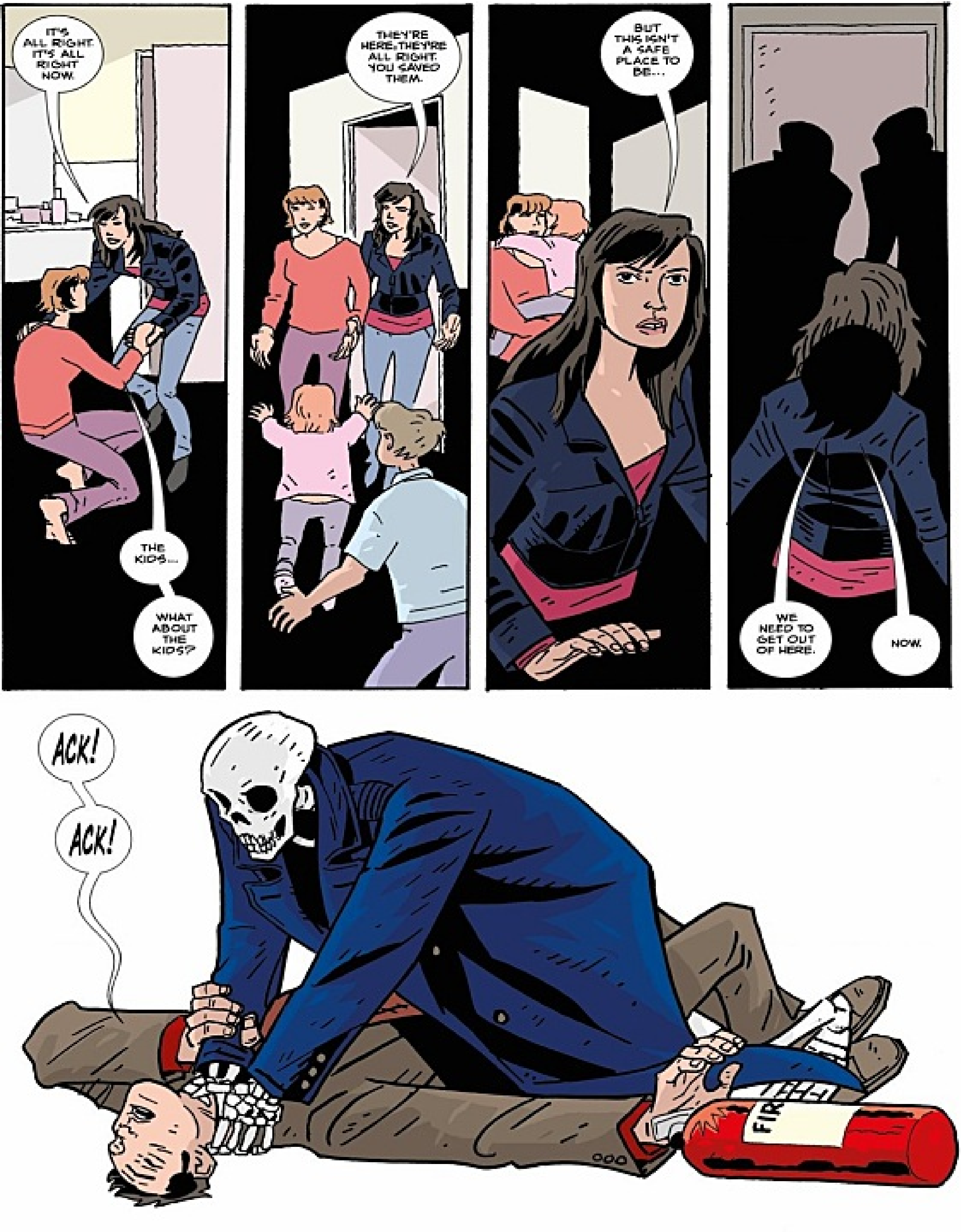

I'M NOT REALLY HERE--
THWACK!
BUT THAT'S THE THING ABOUT FALLING.
CLOCK HOT
ON THE PLUS SIDE, THEY CAN'T HURT ME--
FALLING IS EASY.
YEARRGH!
--BUT AS FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ...?
WELL, I REALLY CAN'T MAKE ANY PROMISES.
IT'S HITTING THE GROUND THAT HURTS.

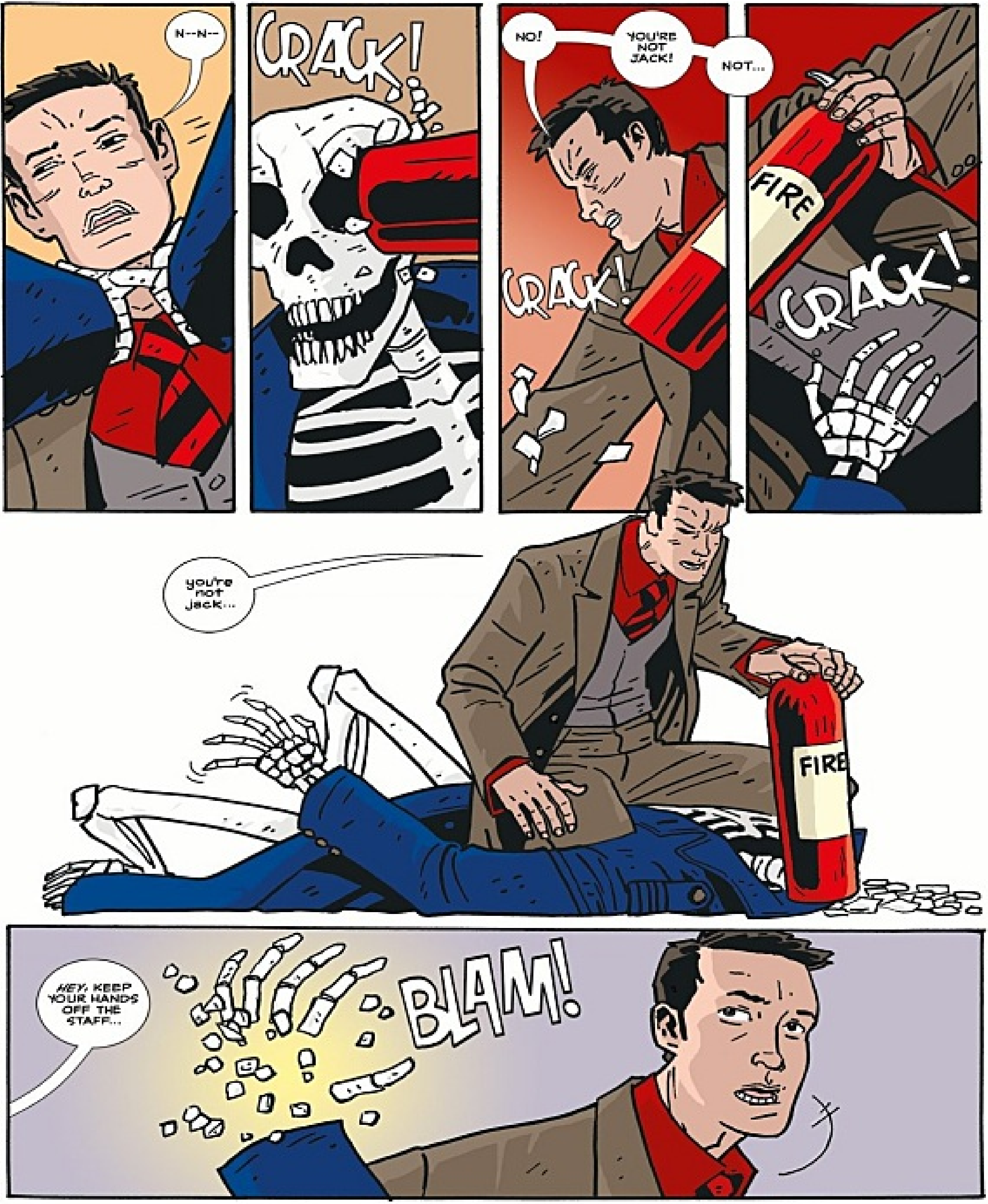

CRASH!
NOOO!
IT'S OKAY. IT'S OKAY. I'M HERE TO HELP.
NO! YOU'RE ONE OF THEM... ONE OF THE SHADOW THINGS.
I'M NOT A SHADOW. I'M HERE TO HELP YOU.
IT'S JUST A SMART SUIT. LOOK.
I SAW YOU IN THE ROOM WITH THEM.
I SAW THEM--I THOUGHT YOU WERE ONE OF THEM--
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M SEEING ANYMORE--
CLUNK!

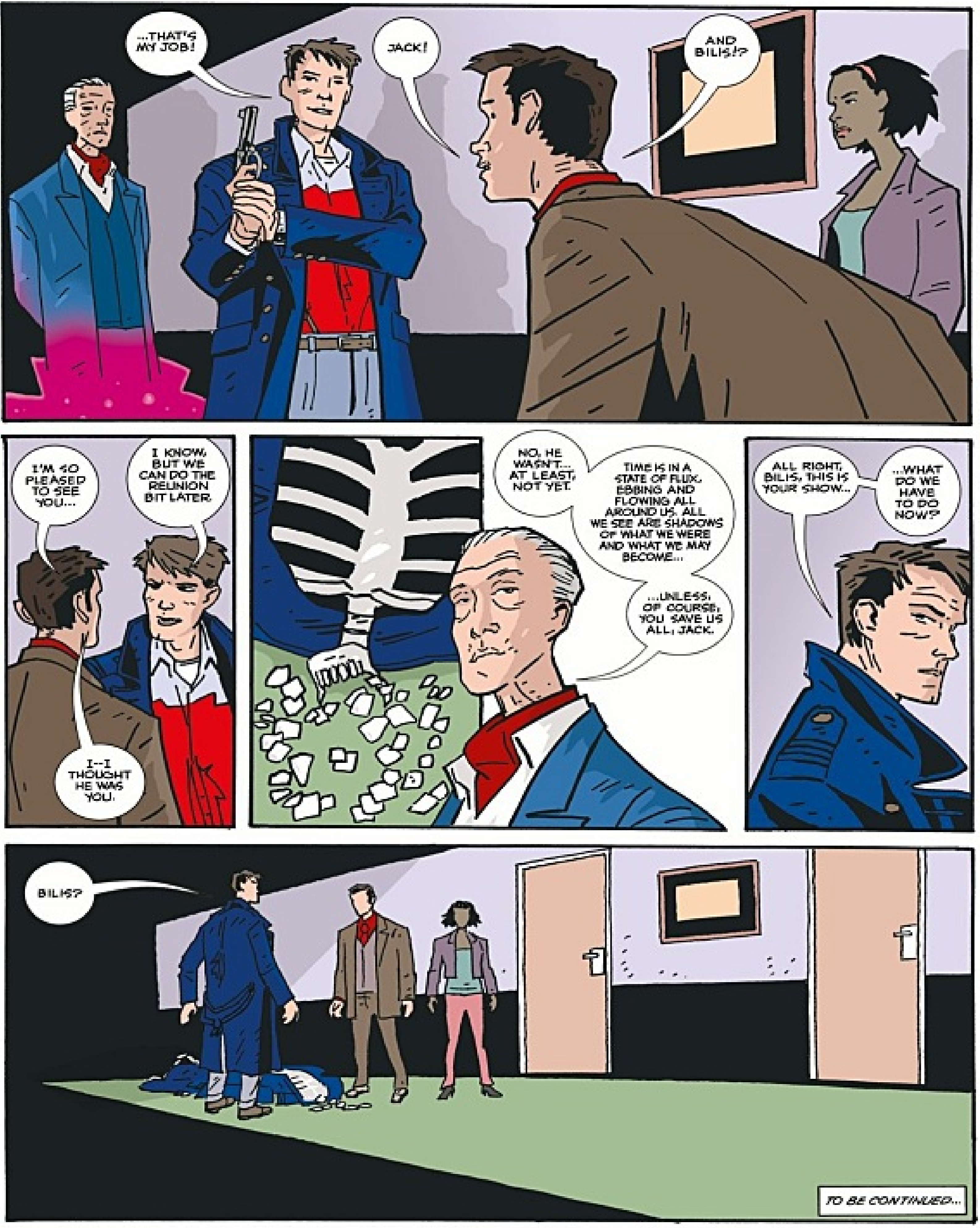

I'M IANTO JONES--
ME AND MY FRIENDS, WE'RE GOING TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE.
YOLANDE. YOLANDE SCOTT.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU, YOLANDE SCOTT.
WHAT ABOUT MY HUSBAND DARREN? HAVE YOU SEEN HIM?
2
WE NEED TO CONCENTRATE ON GETTING OUT NOW--
THERE'S SOMETHING COMING UP IN THE LIFT--
TING
IT'S ALL RIGHT--
WHAT?
IT'S ALL RIGHT, YOLANDE. I KNOW HIM.
THIS IS MY FRIEND, CAPTAIN JACK--
NO! NO! NO!
--HARKNESS--

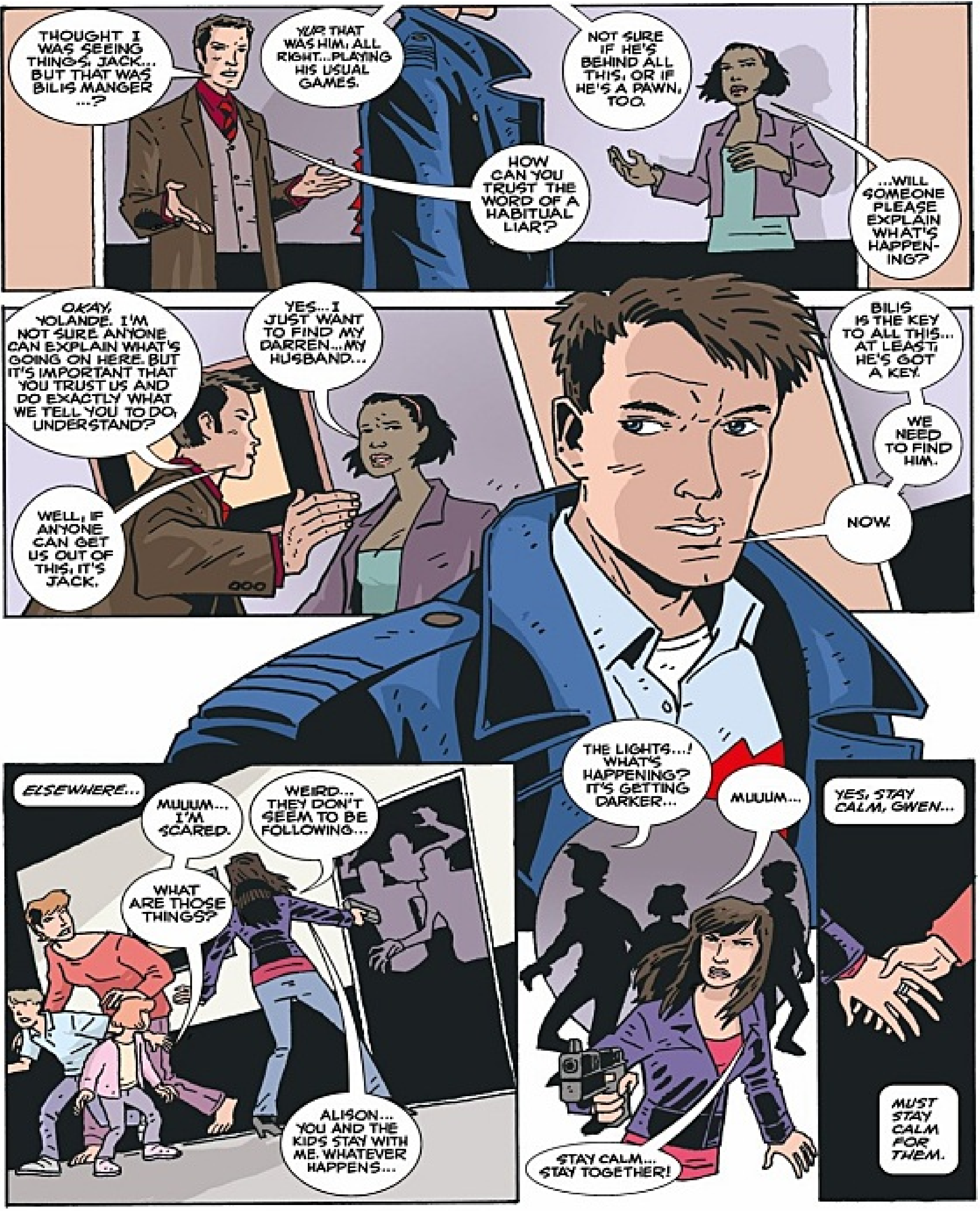

...UNNH ...NO...
WHEN YOU'VE QUITE FINISHED SHOWING OFF...
YOUR PLAYMATES SOON LOST INTEREST, ONCE YOU STOPPED TWITCHING.
I THOUGHT YOU SAID THIS WAS YOUR TRAP. YOUR CONTAINER FOR THE RIFT.
WE'RE ALL PRISONERS, CAPTAIN. YOU, ME, YOUR FRIENDS, TOO.
BUT I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS THE KEY...
THE ONLY QUESTION YOU HAVE TO ASK IS, AM I LETTING YOU OUT...
...OR LOCKING YOU IN?

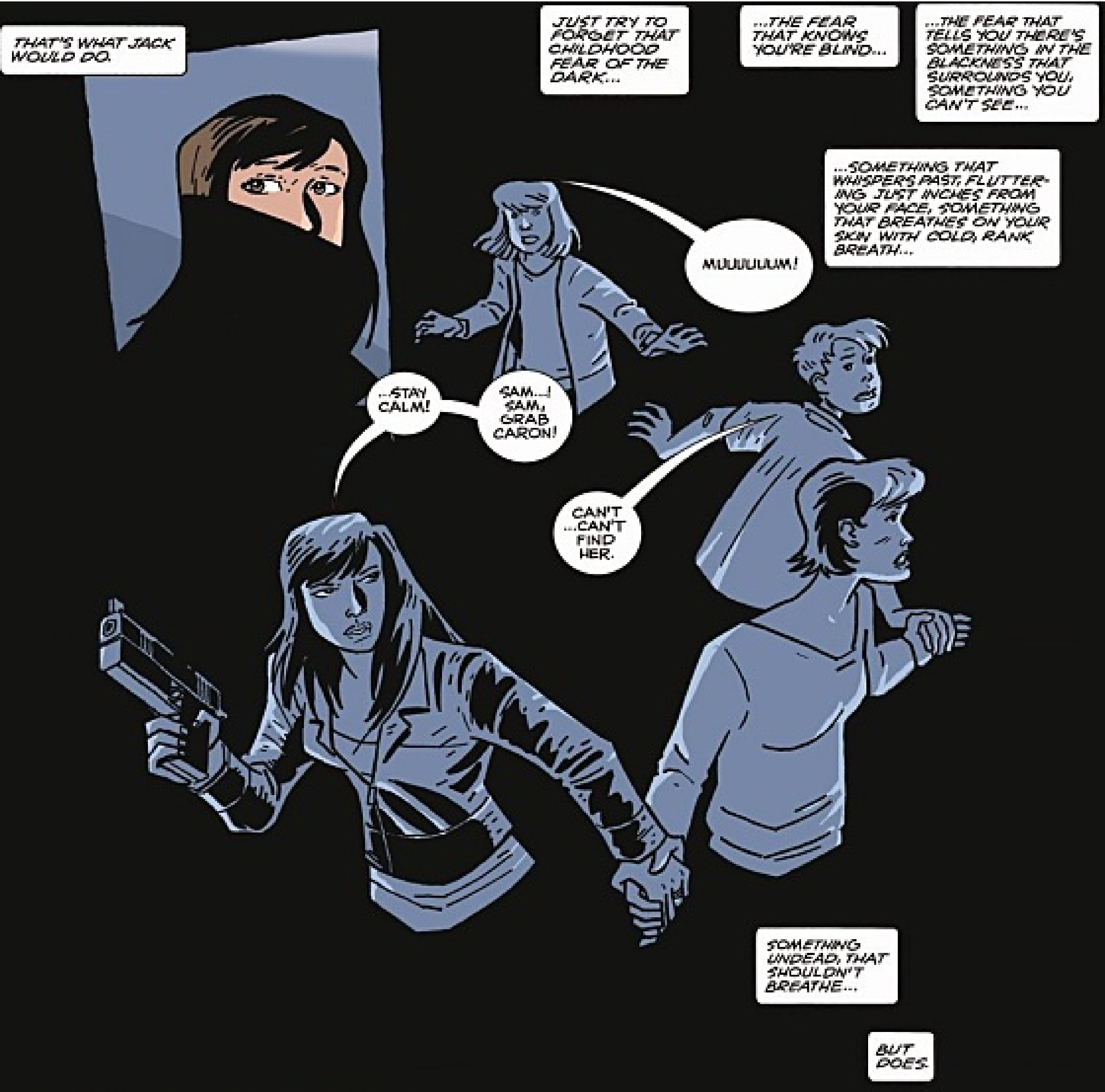

HELLO. MY NAME'S OWEN.
WHAT'S YOURS THEN, SWEET-HEART?
SAM.
CARON.
WHERE'S YOUR MUM? IS SHE HERE?
SHE TOLD US TO STAY HERE. THERE WAS A MAN AT THE DOOR...
WE'RE PLAYING A GAME...
HE SAID ROOM SERVICE...
YOU JUST STAY THERE ...I'LL FIND YOUR MUM...
HE... HE JUST...
HE CAME AT ME...


IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW.
THE KIDS...
WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS?
THEY'RE HERE. THEY'RE ALL RIGHT. YOU SAVED THEM.
BUT THIS ISN'T A SAFE PLACE TO BE...
WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE.
NOW.
ACK!
ACK!
FIR


N--N--
CRACK!
NO!
YOU'RE NOT JACK!
NOT...
CRACK!
FIRE
CRACK!
you're not jack...
FIRE
HEY, KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF THE STAFF...
BLAM!


...THAT'S MY JOB!
JACK!
AND BILIS!?
I'M SO PLEASED TO SEE YOU...
I KNOW, BUT WE CAN DO THE REUNION BIT LATER.
I--I THOUGHT HE WAS YOU.
NO, HE WASN'T... AT LEAST, NOT YET.
TIME IS IN A STATE OF FLUX, EBBING AND FLOWING ALL AROUND US. ALL WE SEE ARE SHADOWS OF WHAT WE WERE AND WHAT WE MAY BECOME...
...UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU SAVE US ALL, JACK.
ALL RIGHT, BILIS, THIS IS YOUR SHOW...
...WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO NOW?
BILIS?
TO BE CONTINUED...

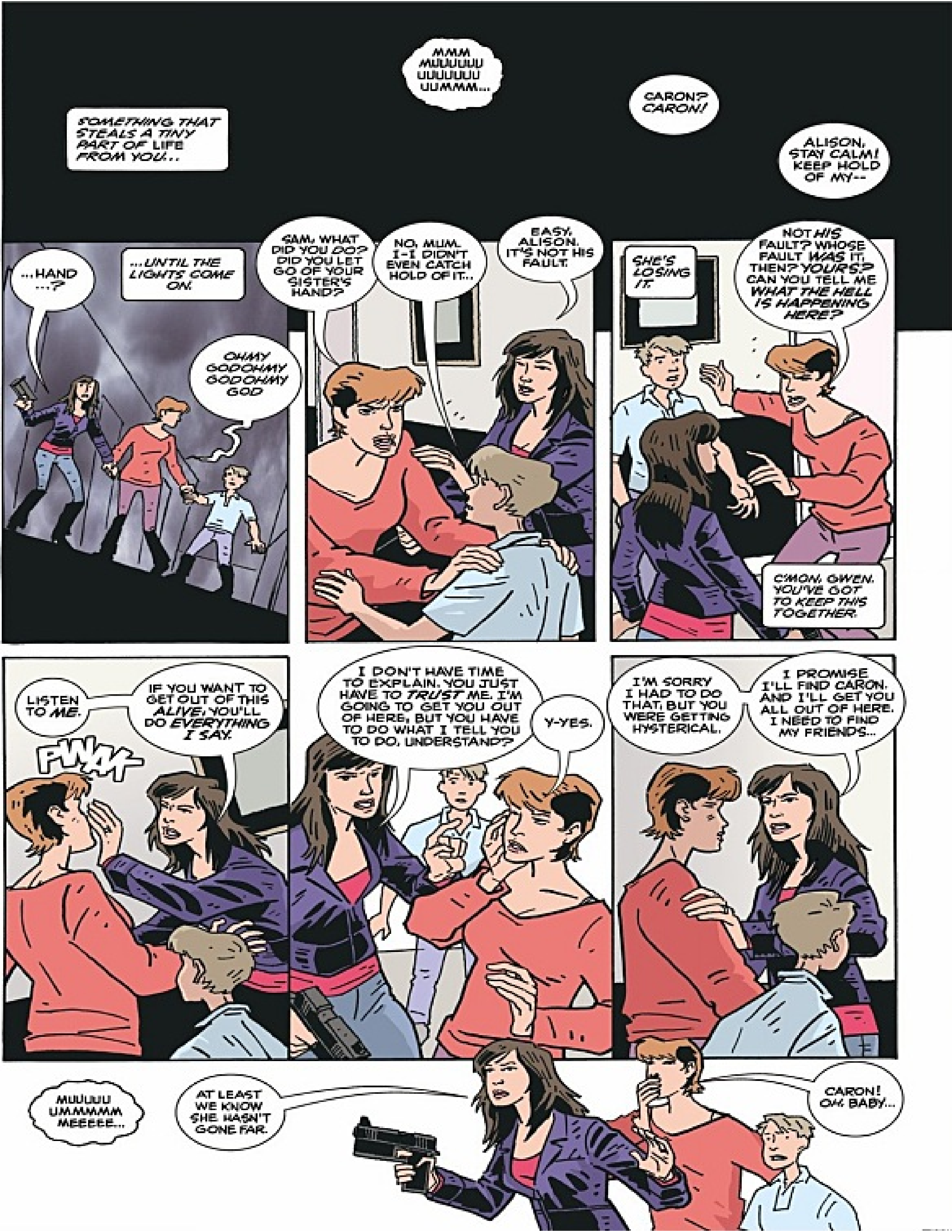

THOUGHT I WAS SEEING THINGS, JACK... BUT THAT WAS BILIS MANGER ...?
YUP. THAT WAS HIM, ALL RIGHT...PLAYING HIS USUAL GAMES.
HOW CAN YOU TRUST THE WORD OF A HABITUAL LIAR?
NOT SURE IF HE'S BEHIND ALL THIS, OR IF HE'S A PAWN, TOO.
...WILL SOMEONE PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT'S HAPPENING?
OKAY, YOLANDE. I'M NOT SURE ANYONE CAN EXPLAIN WHAT'S GOING ON HERE. BUT IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU TRUST US AND DO EXACTLY WHAT WE TELL YOU TO DO, UNDERSTAND?
YES... I JUST WANT TO FIND MY DARREN...MY HUSBAND...
WELL, IF ANYONE CAN GET US OUT OF THIS, IT'S JACK.
BILIS IS THE KEY TO ALL THIS... AT LEAST, HE'S GOT A KEY.
WE NEED TO FIND HIM.
NOW.
ELSEWHERE...
MUUUM... I'M SCARED.
WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS?
WEIRD... THEY DON'T SEEM TO BE FOLLOWING...
ALISON... YOU AND THE KIDS STAY WITH ME. WHATEVER HAPPENS...
THE LIGHTS...! WHAT'S HAPPENING? IT'S GETTING DARKER...
MUUUM...
STAY CALM... STAY TOGETHER!
YES, STAY CALM, GWEN...
MUST STAY CALM FOR THEM.

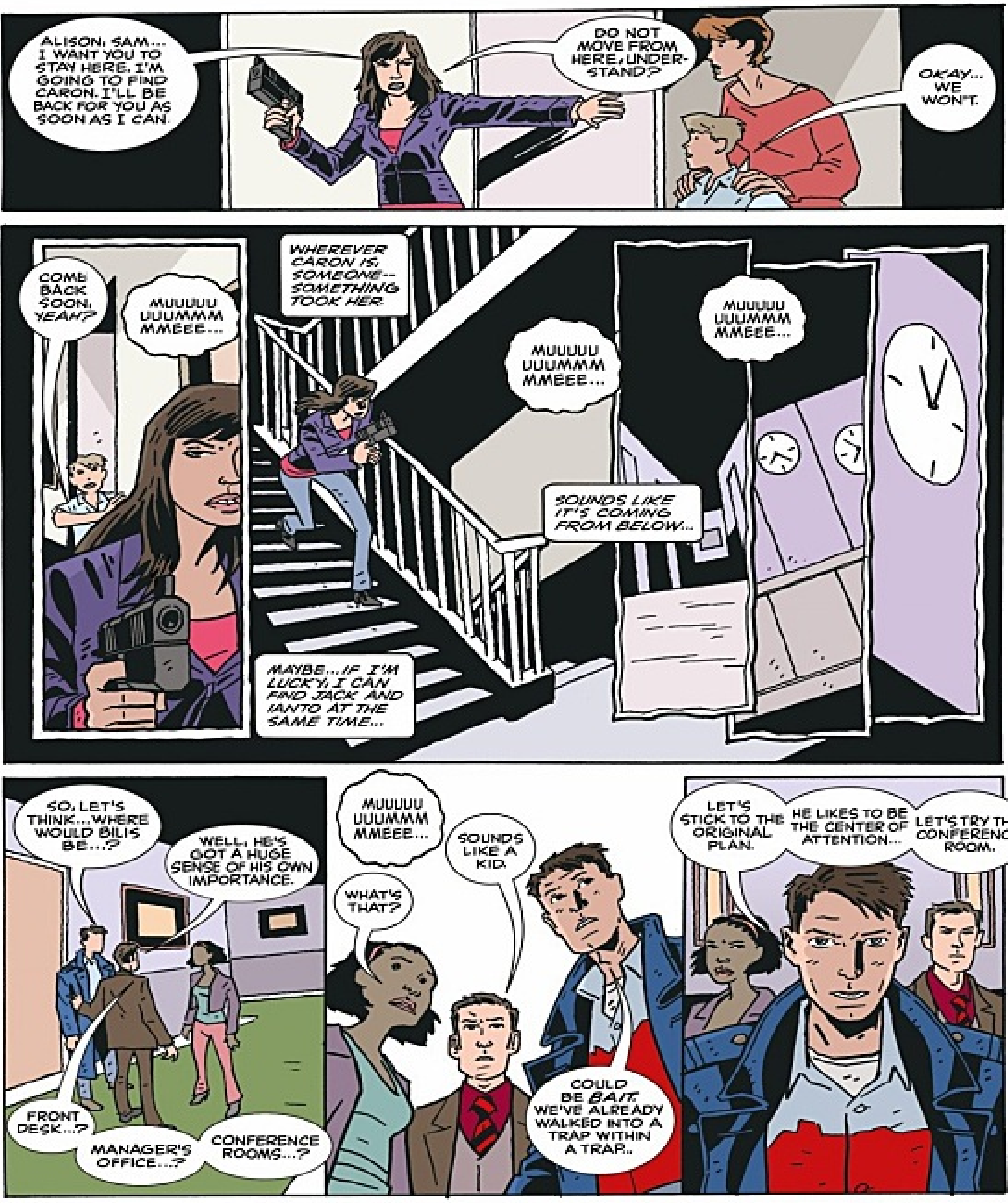

THAT'S WHAT JACK WOULD DO.
JUST TRY TO FORGET THAT CHILDHOOD FEAR OF THE DARK...
...THE FEAR THAT KNOWS YOU'RE BLIND...
...THE FEAR THAT TELLS YOU THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE BLACKNESS THAT SURROUNDS YOU, SOMETHING YOU CAN'T SEE...
...SOMETHING THAT WHISPERS PAST, FLUTTERING JUST INCHES FROM YOUR FACE, SOMETHING THAT BREATHES ON YOUR SKIN WITH COLD, RANK BREATH...
MUUUUUUM!
...STAY CALM!
SAM...! SAM, GRAB CARON!
CAN'T ...CAN'T FIND HER.
SOMETHING UNDEAD, THAT SHOULDN'T BREATHE...
BUT DOES.

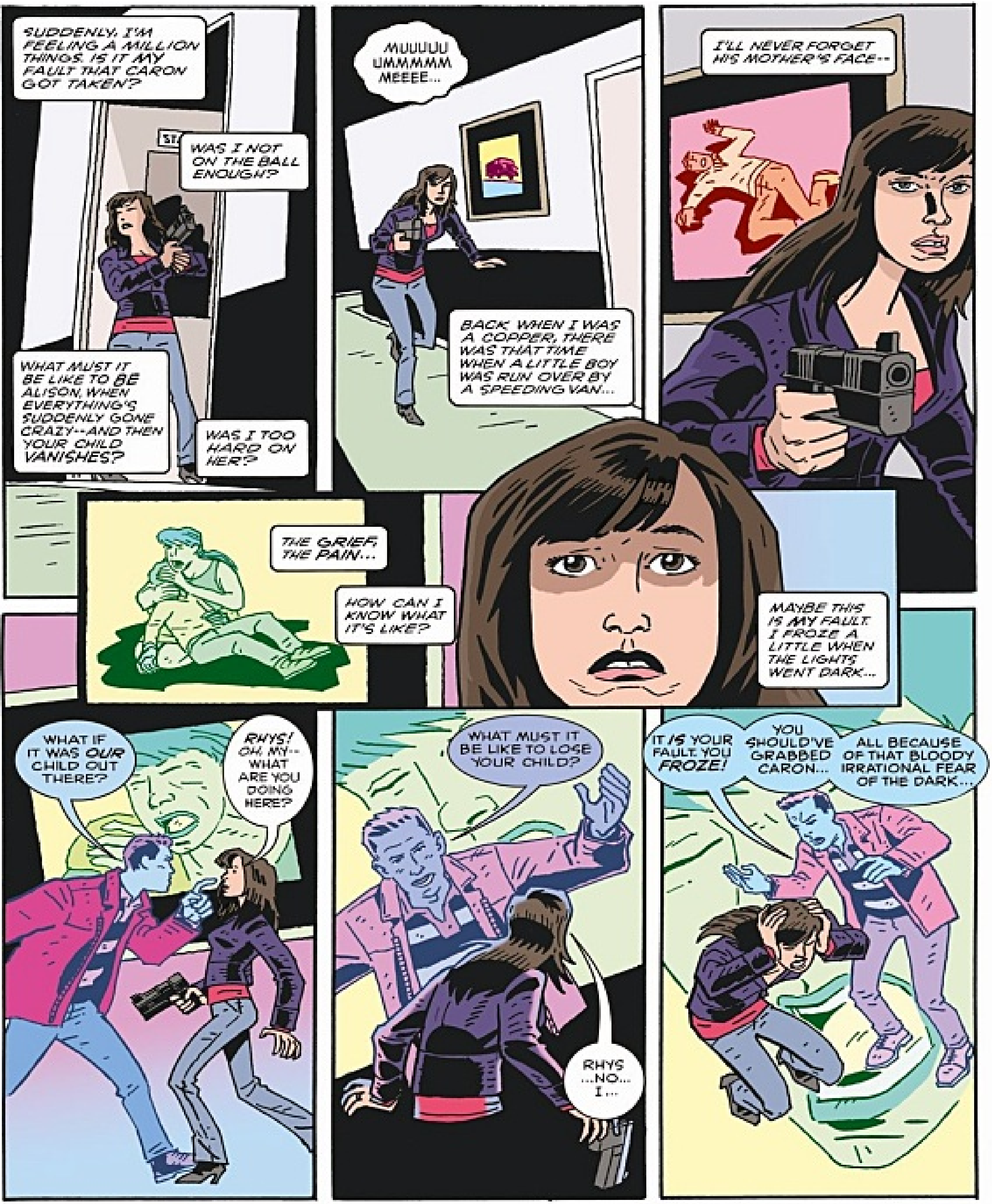
BROKEN

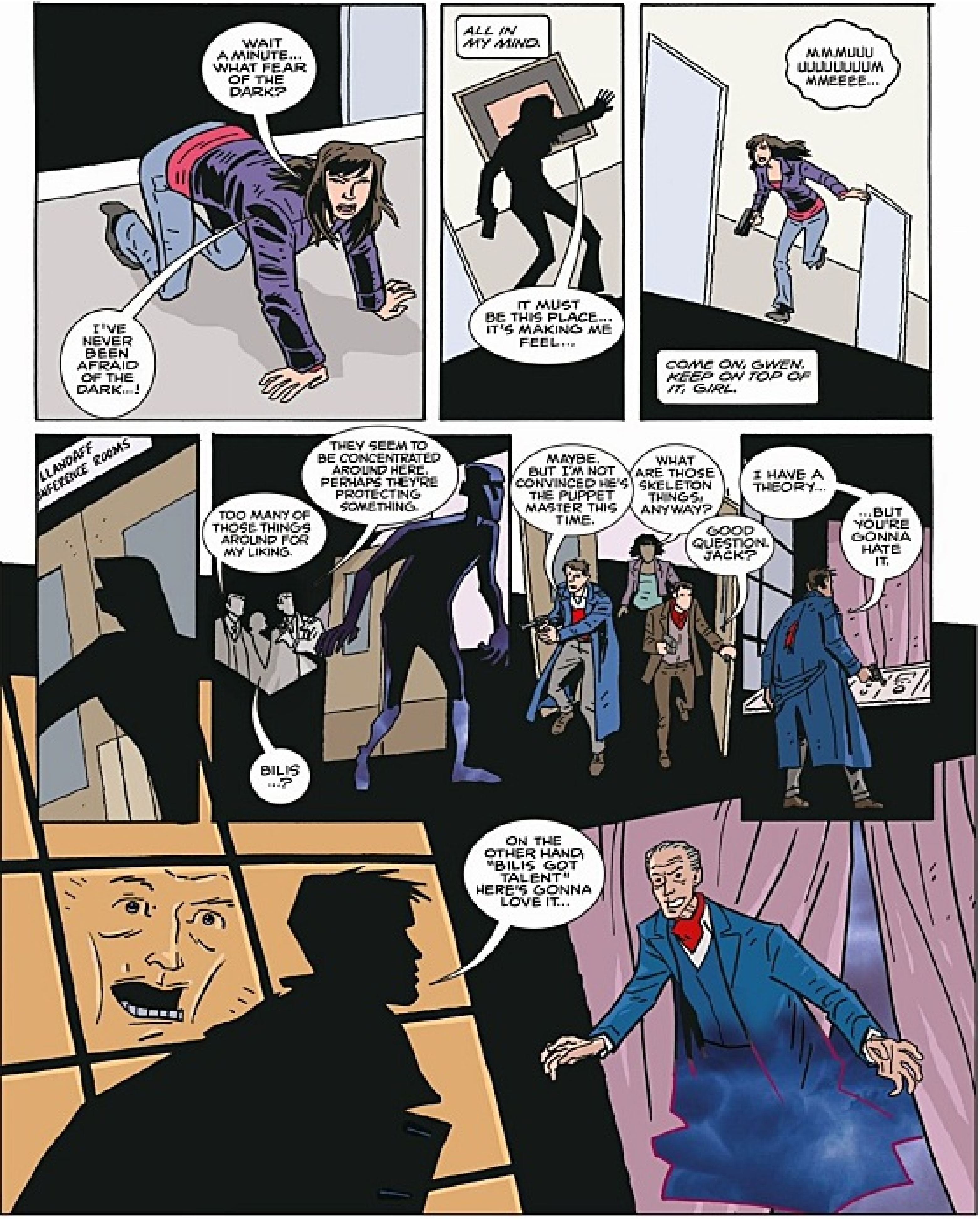
- WRITTEN BY NICK ABADZIS
- ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL GRIST
- COLORING BY PHIL ELLIOTT
- LETTERING BY JOHN WORKMAN

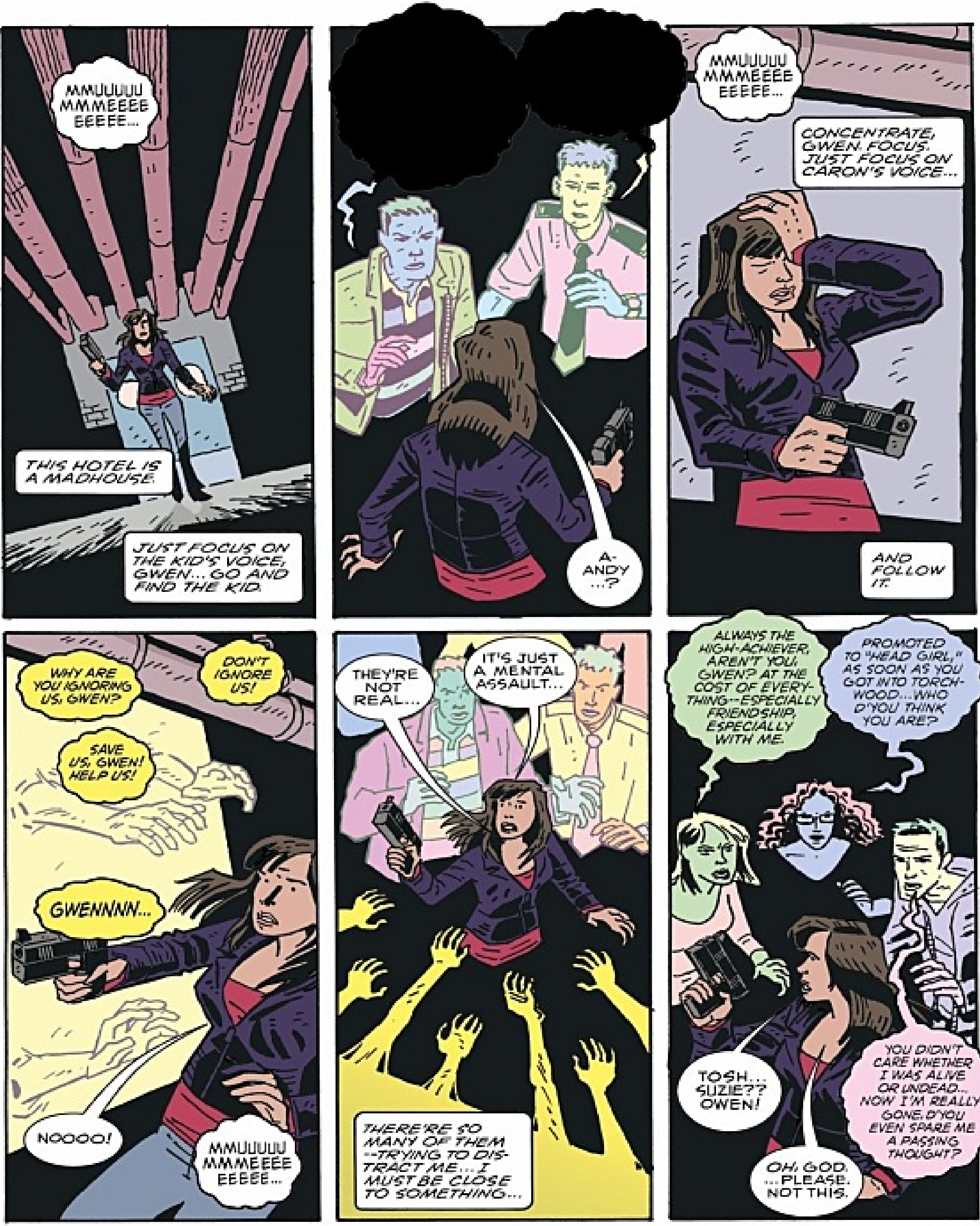
PART 3 OF 5

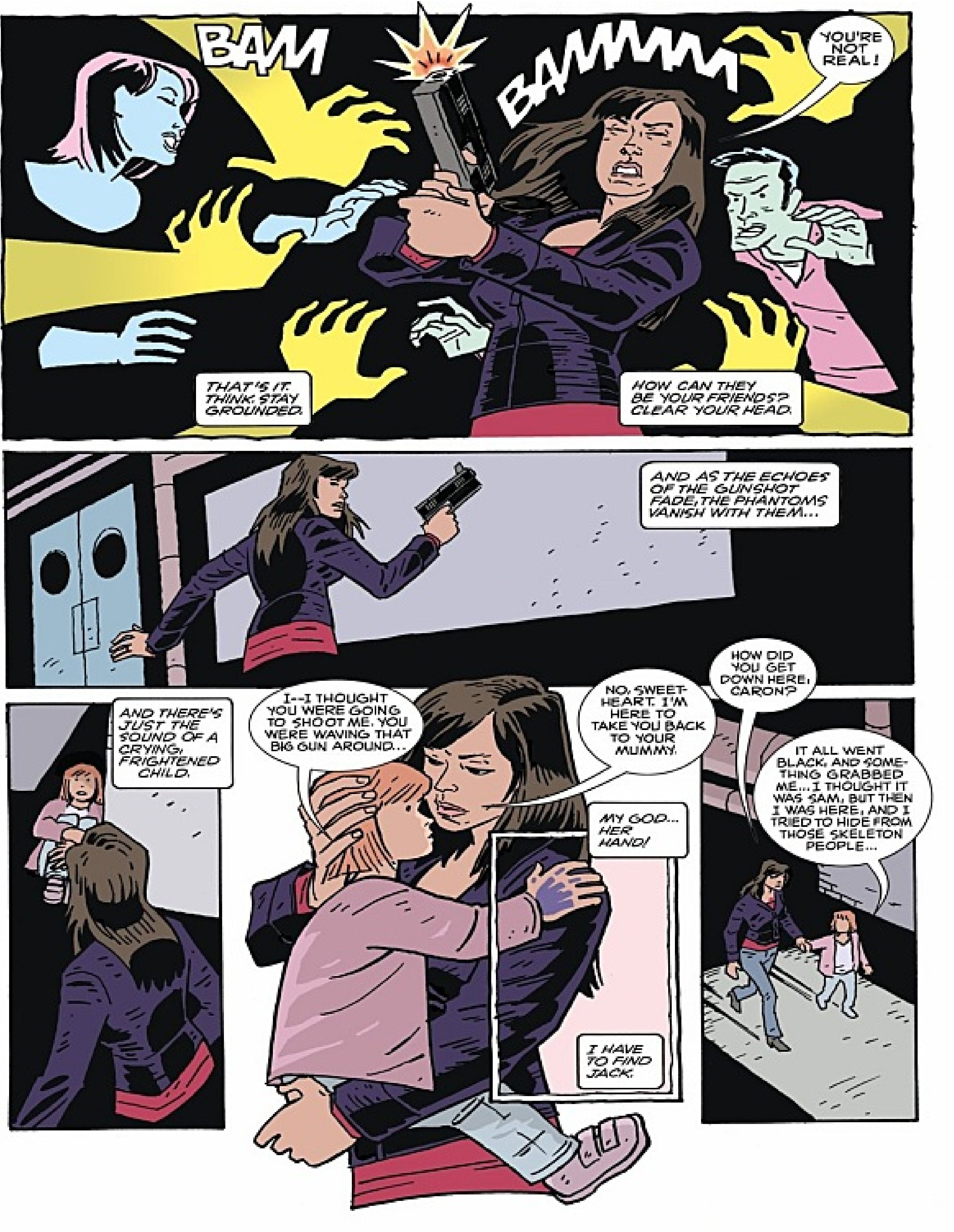

SOMETHING THAT STEALS A TINY PART OF LIFE FROM YOU...
MMM MUUUUUU UUUUUUU UUMMM...
CARON? CARON!
ALISON, STAY CALM! KEEP HOLD OF MY--
...HAND ...?
...UNTIL THE LIGHTS COME ON.
OHMY GODOHMY GODOHMY GOD
SAM, WHAT DID YOU DO? DID YOU LET GO OF YOUR SISTER'S HAND?
NO, MUM. I-I DIDN'T EVEN CATCH HOLD OF IT...
EASY, ALISON. IT'S NOT HIS FAULT.
SHE'S LOSING IT.
NOT HIS FAULT? WHOSE FAULT WAS IT, THEN? YOURS? CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING HERE?
C'MON, GWEN. YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP THIS TOGETHER.
LISTEN TO ME.
IF YOU WANT TO GET OUT OF THIS ALIVE, YOU'LL DO EVERYTHING I SAY.
PWAK
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO EXPLAIN. YOU JUST HAVE TO TRUST ME. I'M GOING TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE, BUT YOU HAVE TO DO WHAT I TELL YOU TO DO, UNDERSTAND?
Y-YES.
I'M SORRY I HAD TO DO THAT, BUT YOU WERE GETTING HYSTERICAL.
I PROMISE I'LL FIND CARON. AND I'LL GET YOU ALL OUT OF HERE. I NEED TO FIND MY FRIENDS...
MUUUUU UMMMMM MEEEEE...
AT LEAST WE KNOW SHE HASN'T GONE FAR.
CARON! OH, BABY...

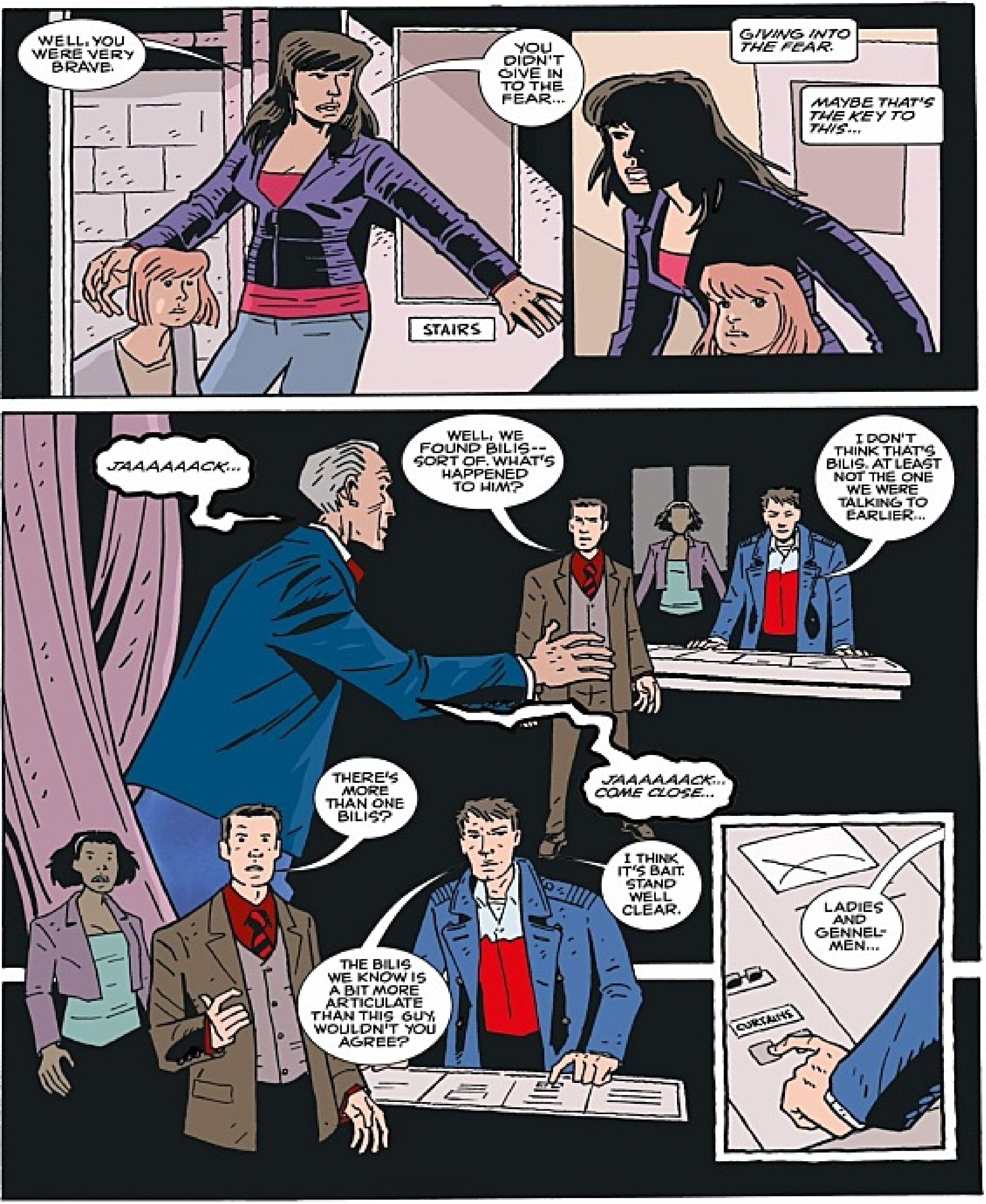

ALISON, SAM... I WANT YOU TO STAY HERE. I'M GOING TO FIND CARON. I'LL BE BACK FOR YOU AS SOON AS I CAN.
DO NOT MOVE FROM HERE, UNDERSTAND?
OKAY... WE WON'T.
COME BACK SOON, YEAH?
MUUUUU UUUMMM MMEEE...
WHEREVER CARON IS, SOMEONE-- SOMETHING TOOK HER.
MAYBE... IF I'M LUCKY, I CAN FIND JACK AND IANTO AT THE SAME TIME...
MUUUUU UUUMMM MMEEE...
MUUUUU UUUMMM MMEEE...
SOUNDS LIKE IT'S COMING FROM BELOW...
SO, LET'S THINK... WHERE WOULD BILIS BE...?
WELL, HE'S GOT A HUGE SENSE OF HIS OWN IMPORTANCE.
FRONT DESK...?
MANAGER'S OFFICE...?
CONFERENCE ROOMS...?
MUUUUU UUUMMM MMEEE...
WHAT'S THAT?
SOUNDS LIKE A KID.
COULD BE *BAIT.* WE'VE ALREADY WALKED INTO A TRAP WITHIN A TRAP..
LET'S STICK TO THE ORIGINAL PLAN.
HE LIKES TO BE THE CENTER OF ATTENTION...
LET'S TRY THE CONFERENCE ROOM.

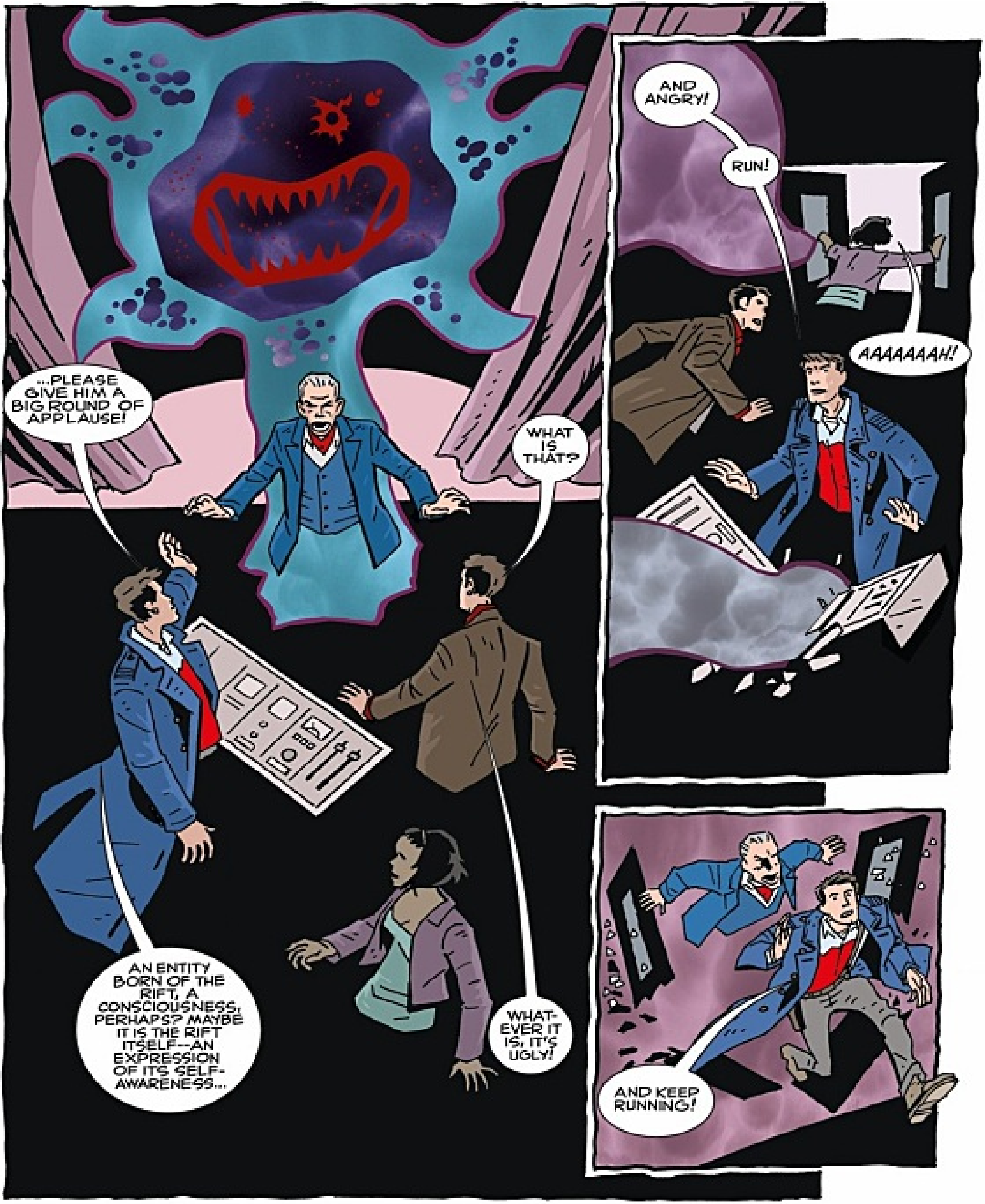

SUDDENLY, I'M FEELING A MILLION THINGS. IS IT MY FAULT THAT CARON GOT TAKEN?
WAS I NOT ON THE BALL ENOUGH?
WHAT MUST IT BE LIKE TO BE ALISON, WHEN EVERYTHING'S SUDDENLY GONE CRAZY--AND THEN YOUR CHILD VANISHES?
WAS I TOO HARD ON HER?
MUUUUU UMMMMM MEEEE...
BACK WHEN I WAS A COPPER, THERE WAS THAT TIME WHEN A LITTLE BOY WAS RUN OVER BY A SPEEDING VAN...
I'LL NEVER FORGET HIS MOTHER'S FACE--
THE GRIEF, THE PAIN...
HOW CAN I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE?
MAYBE THIS IS MY FAULT. I FROZE A LITTLE WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT DARK...
WHAT IF IT WAS OUR CHILD OUT THERE?
RHYS! OH, MY-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WHAT MUST IT BE LIKE TO LOSE YOUR CHILD?
RHYS ...NO... I...
IT IS YOUR FAULT. YOU FROZE!
YOU SHOULD'VE GRABBED CARON...
ALL BECAUSE OF THAT BLOODY IRRATIONAL FEAR OF THE DARK...

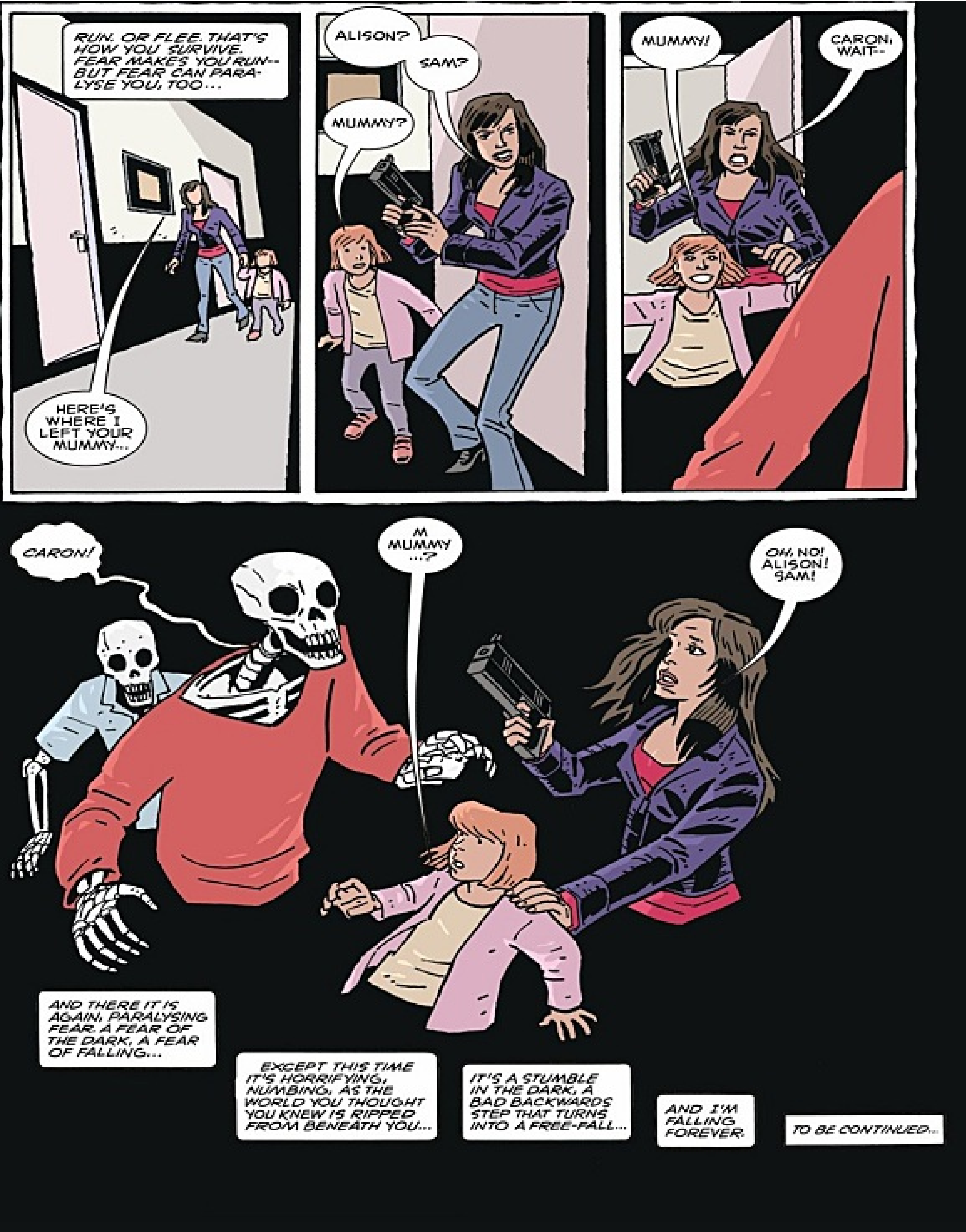

WAIT A MINUTE... WHAT FEAR OF THE DARK?
I'VE NEVER BEEN AFRAID OF THE DARK...!
ALL IN MY MIND.
IT MUST BE THIS PLACE... IT'S MAKING ME FEEL...
MMMUUU UUUUUUUUM MMEEEE...
COME ON, GWEN. KEEP ON TOP OF IT, GIRL.
LLANDAFF
NFERENCE ROOMS
TOO MANY OF THOSE THINGS AROUND FOR MY LIKING.
THEY SEEM TO BE CONCENTRATED AROUND HERE. PERHAPS THEY'RE PROTECTING SOMETHING.
BILIS ...?
MAYBE. BUT I'M NOT CONVINCED HE'S THE PUPPET MASTER THIS TIME.
WHAT ARE THOSE SKELETON THINGS, ANYWAY?
GOOD QUESTION. JACK?
I HAVE A THEORY...
...BUT YOU'RE GONNA HATE IT.
ON THE OTHER HAND, "BILIS GOT TALENT" HERE'S GONNA LOVE IT...

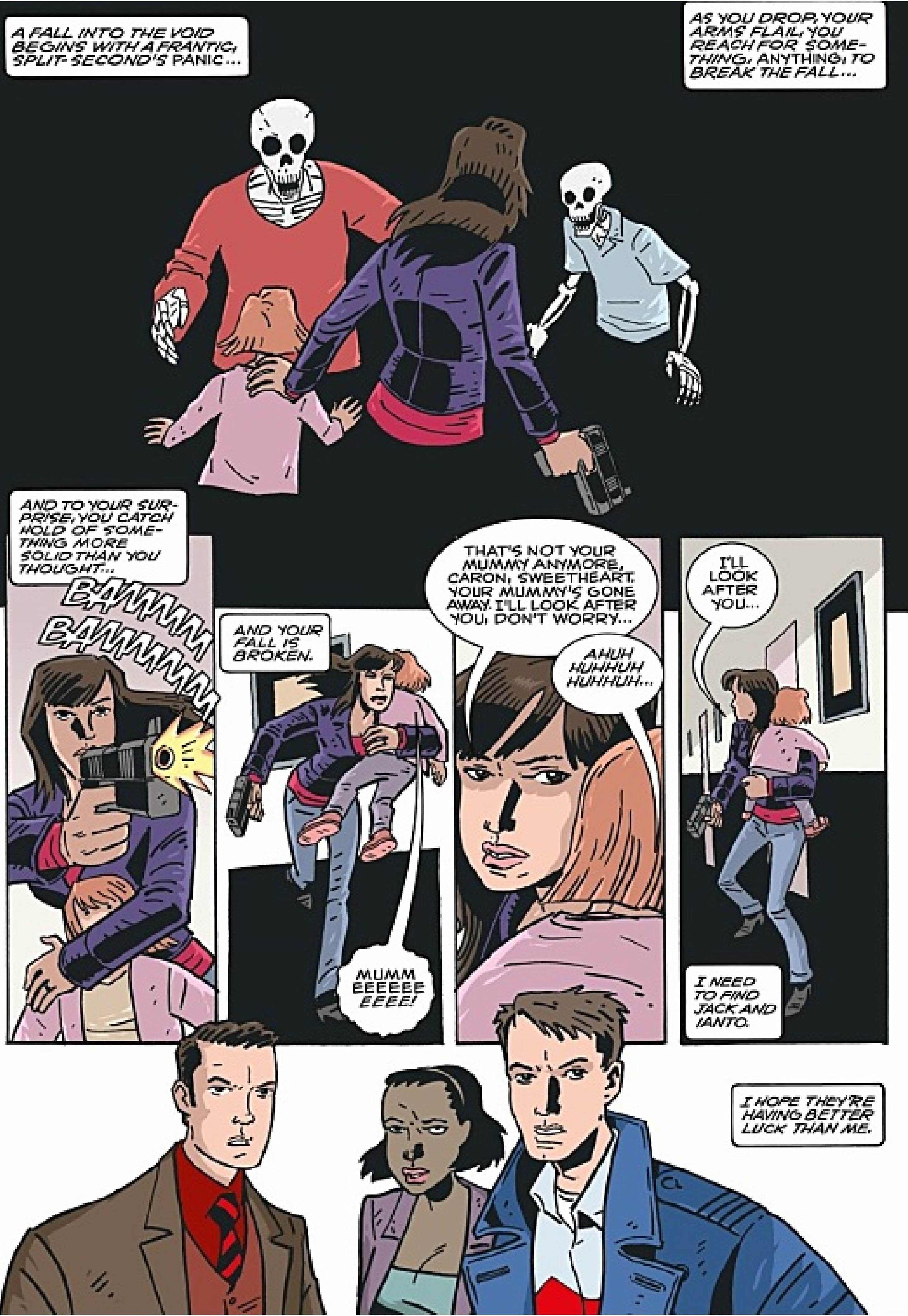

MMUUUUU MMMEEEE EEEEE...
THIS HOTEL IS A MADHOUSE.
JUST FOCUS ON THE KID'S VOICE, GWEN... GO AND FIND THE KID.
[redacted]
[redacted]
A- ANDY ...?
MMUUUUU MMMEEEE EEEEE...
CONCENTRATE, GWEN. FOCUS. JUST FOCUS ON CARON'S VOICE...
AND FOLLOW IT.
WHY ARE YOU IGNORING US, GWEN?
DON'T IGNORE US!
SAVE US, GWEN! HELP US!
GWENNNN...
NOOOO!
MMUUUUU MMMEEEE EEEEE...
THEY'RE NOT REAL...
IT'S JUST A MENTAL ASSAULT...
THERE'RE SO MANY OF THEM --TRYING TO DISTRACT ME... I MUST BE CLOSE TO SOMETHING...
ALWAYS THE HIGH-ACHIEVER, AREN'T YOU, GWEN? AT THE COST OF EVERYTHING--ESPECIALLY FRIENDSHIP. ESPECIALLY WITH ME.
PROMOTED TO "HEAD GIRL," AS SOON AS YOU GOT INTO TORCHWOOD... WHO D'YOU THINK YOU ARE?
TOSH... SUZIE?? OWEN!
YOU DIDN'T CARE WHETHER I WAS ALIVE OR UNDEAD... NOW I'M REALLY GONE, D'YOU EVEN SPARE ME A PASSING THOUGHT?
OH, GOD. ...PLEASE. NOT THIS.

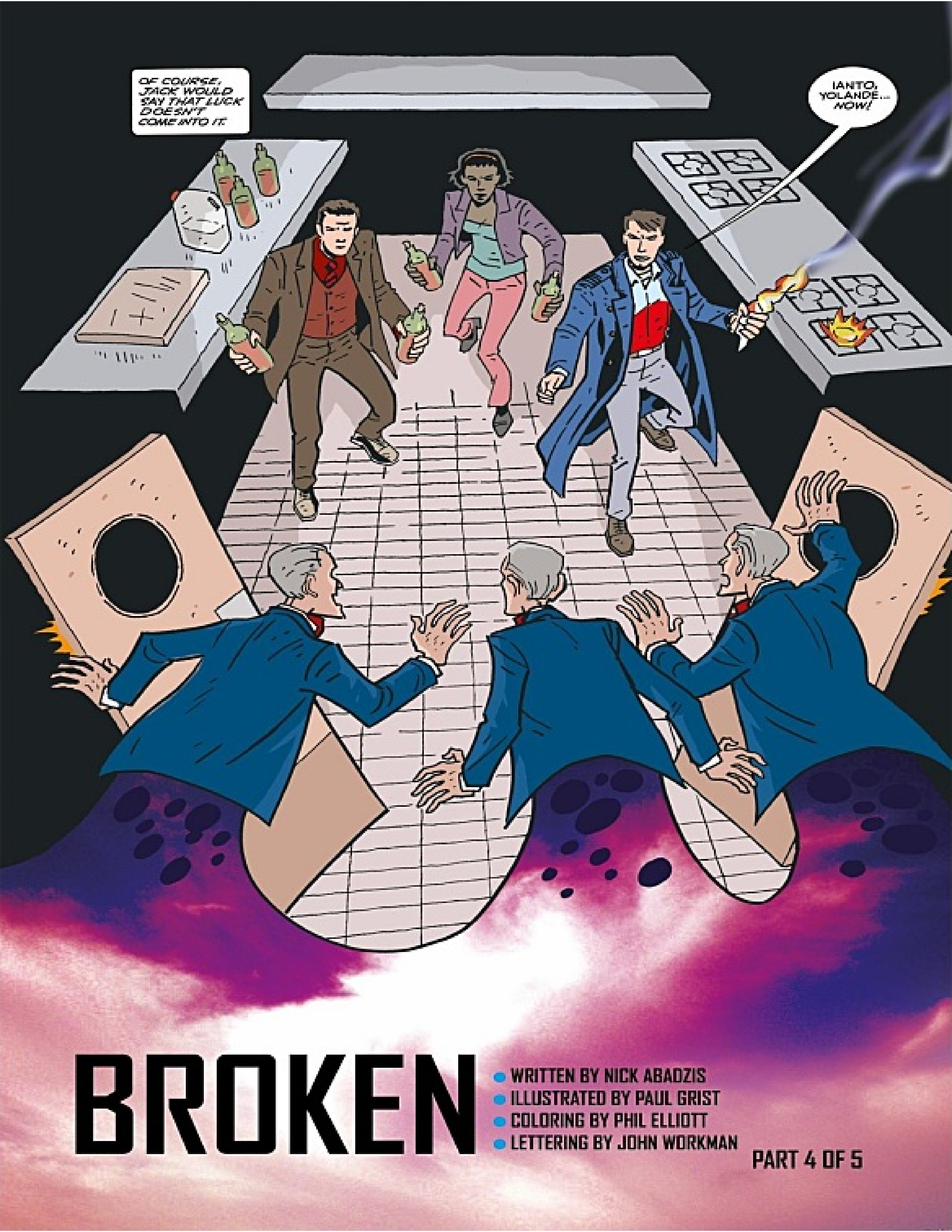

BAM
BAMMMM
YOU'RE NOT REAL!
THAT'S IT. THINK. STAY GROUNDED.
HOW CAN THEY BE YOUR FRIENDS? CLEAR YOUR HEAD.
AND AS THE ECHOES OF THE GUNSHOT FADE, THE PHANTOMS VANISH WITH THEM...
AND THERE'S JUST THE SOUND OF A CRYING, FRIGHTENED CHILD.
I--I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO SHOOT ME. YOU WERE WAVING THAT BIG GUN AROUND...
NO, SWEETHEART. I'M HERE TO TAKE YOU BACK TO YOUR MUMMY.
MY GOD... HER HAND!
I HAVE TO FIND JACK.
HOW DID YOU GET DOWN HERE, CARON?
IT ALL WENT BLACK, AND SOMETHING GRABBED ME... I THOUGHT IT WAS SAM, BUT THEN I WAS HERE, AND I TRIED TO HIDE FROM THOSE SKELETON PEOPLE...


WELL, YOU WERE VERY BRAVE.
YOU DIDN'T GIVE IN TO THE FEAR...
STAIRS
GIVING INTO THE FEAR.
MAYBE THAT'S THE KEY TO THIS...
JAAAAAACK...
WELL, WE FOUND BILIS-- SORT OF. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?
I DON'T THINK THAT'S BILIS. AT LEAST NOT THE ONE WE WERE TALKING TO EARLIER...
JAAAAAACK... COME CLOSE...
THERE'S MORE THAN ONE BILIS?
I THINK IT'S BAIT. STAND WELL CLEAR.
THE BILIS WE KNOW IS A BIT MORE ARTICULATE THAN THIS GUY, WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?
LADIES AND GENNEL-MEN...
CURTAINS


...PLEASE GIVE HIM A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE!
WHAT IS THAT?
AN ENTITY BORN OF THE RIFT, A CONSCIOUSNESS, PERHAPS? MAYBE IT IS THE RIFT ITSELF--AN EXPRESSION OF ITS SELF-AWARENESS...
WHAT-EVER IT IS, IT'S UGLY!
AND ANGRY!
RUN!
AAAAAAAH!
AND KEEP RUNNING!


RUN. OR FLEE. THAT'S HOW YOU SURVIVE. FEAR MAKES YOU RUN-- BUT FEAR CAN PARALYSE YOU, TOO...
HERE'S WHERE I LEFT YOUR MUMMY...
ALISON?
SAM?
MUMMY?
MUMMY!
CARON, WAIT--
CARON!
M MUMMY ...?
OH, NO! ALISON! SAM!
AND THERE IT IS AGAIN. PARALYSING FEAR. A FEAR OF THE DARK, A FEAR OF FALLING...
EXCEPT THIS TIME IT'S HORRIFYING, NUMBING, AS THE WORLD YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW IS RIPPED FROM BENEATH YOU...
IT'S A STUMBLE IN THE DARK, A BAD BACKWARDS STEP THAT TURNS INTO A FREE-FALL...
AND I'M FALLING FOREVER.
TO BE CONTINUED...

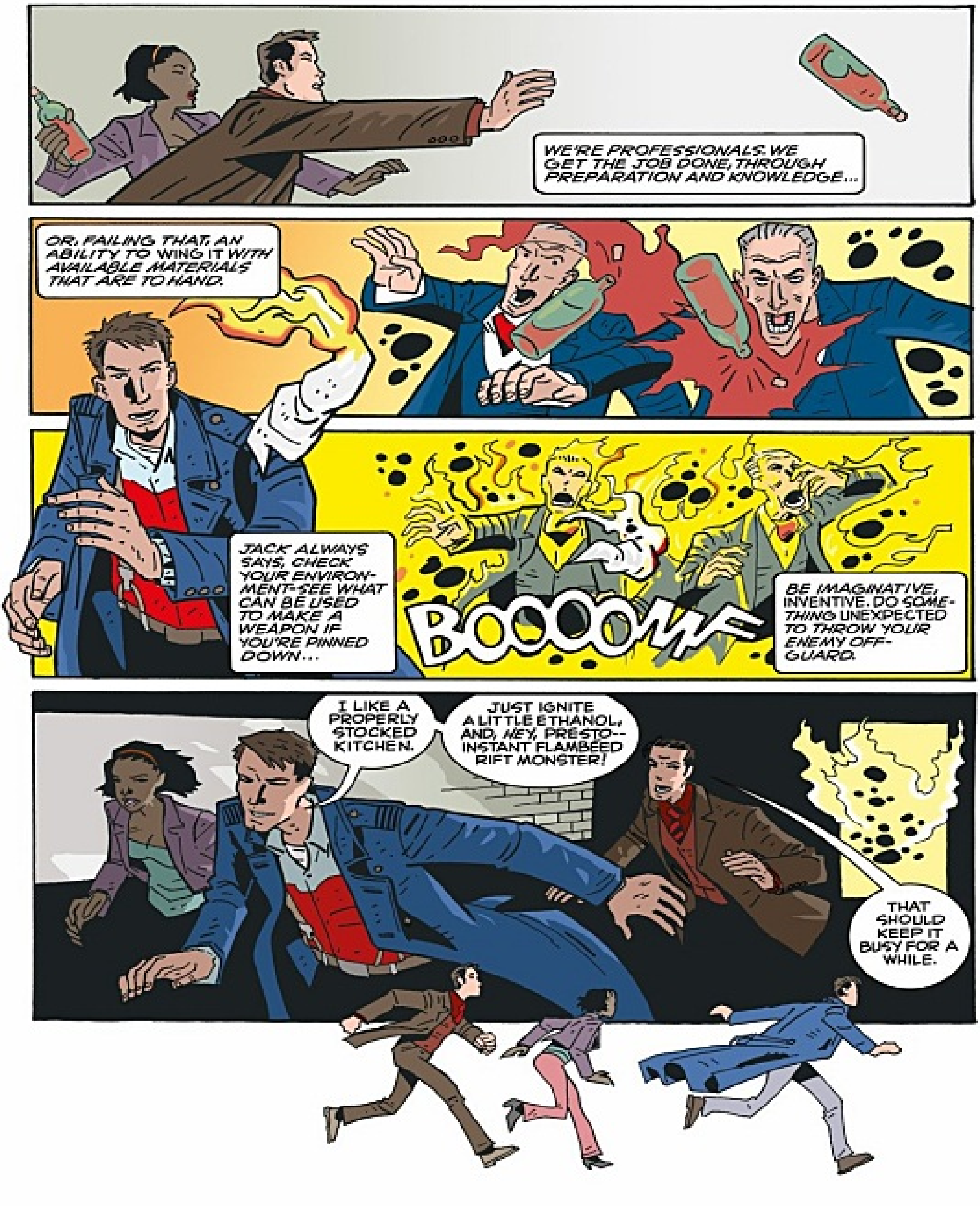

A FALL INTO THE VOID BEGINS WITH A FRANTIC, SPLIT-SECOND'S PANIC...
AS YOU DROP, YOUR ARMS FLAIL, YOU REACH FOR SOMETHING, ANYTHING, TO BREAK THE FALL...
AND TO YOUR SURPRISE, YOU CATCH HOLD OF SOMETHING MORE SOLID THAN YOU THOUGHT...
BAMMMMM
BAMMMMMM
AND YOUR FALL IS BROKEN.
MUMMEEEEEEEEEE!
THAT'S NOT YOUR MUMMY ANYMORE, CARON, SWEETHEART. YOUR MUMMY'S GONE AWAY. I'LL LOOK AFTER YOU, DON'T WORRY...
AHUH HUHHUH HUHHUH...
I'LL LOOK AFTER YOU...
I NEED TO FIND JACK AND IANTO.
I HOPE THEY'RE HAVING BETTER LUCK THAN ME.

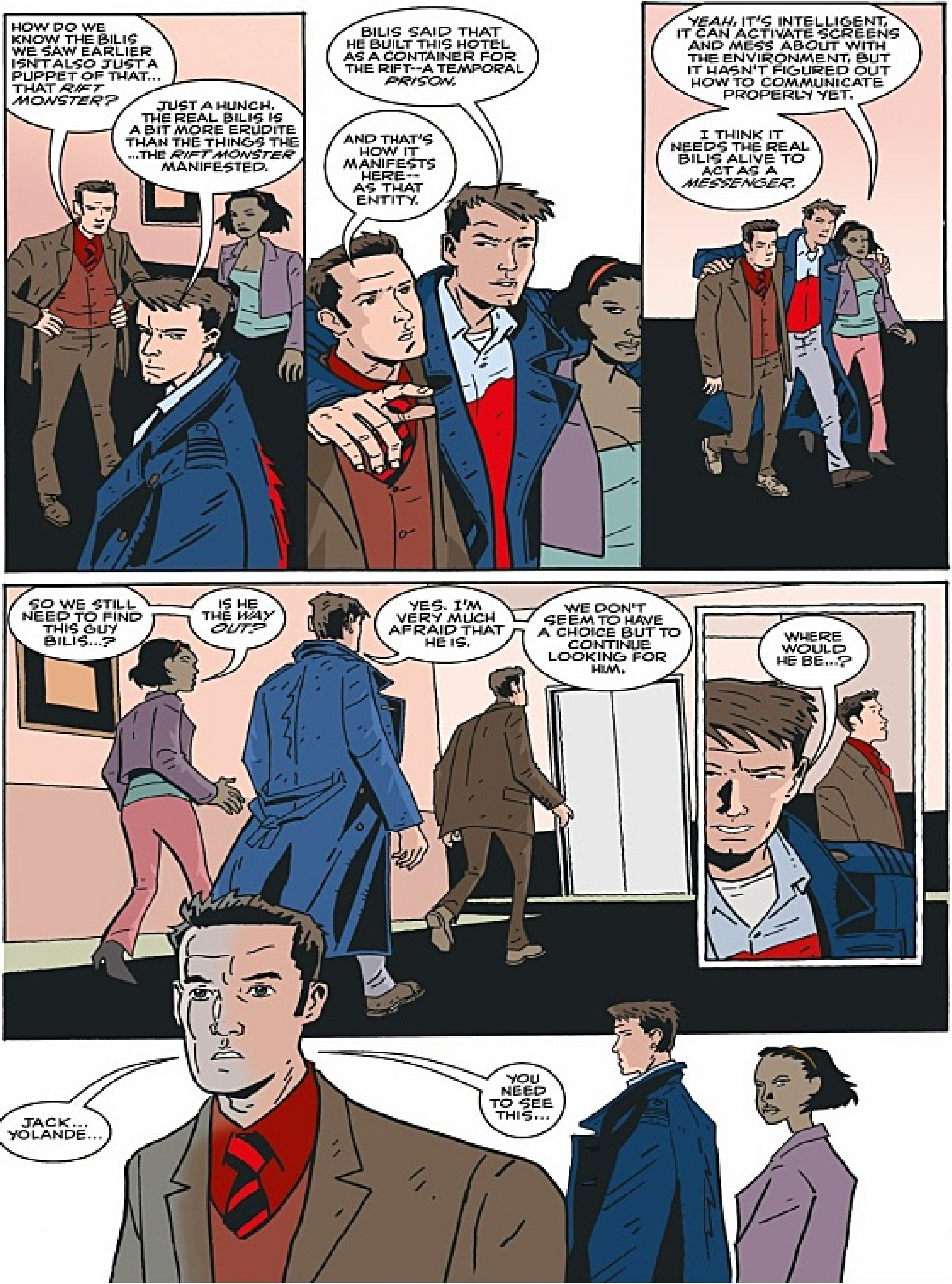

OF COURSE, JACK WOULD SAY THAT LUCK DOESN'T COME INTO IT.
IANTO, YOLANDE... NOW!

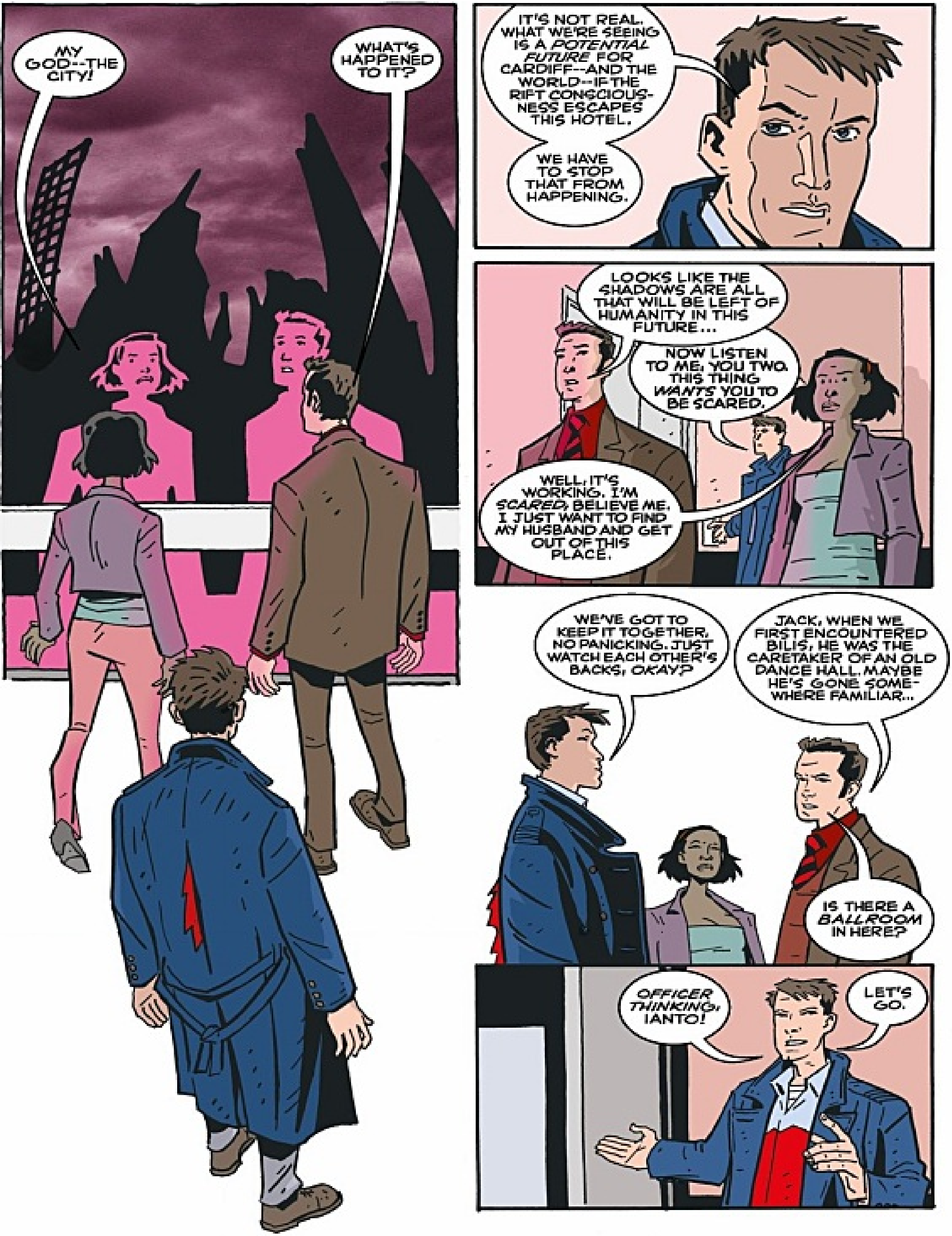
BROKEN

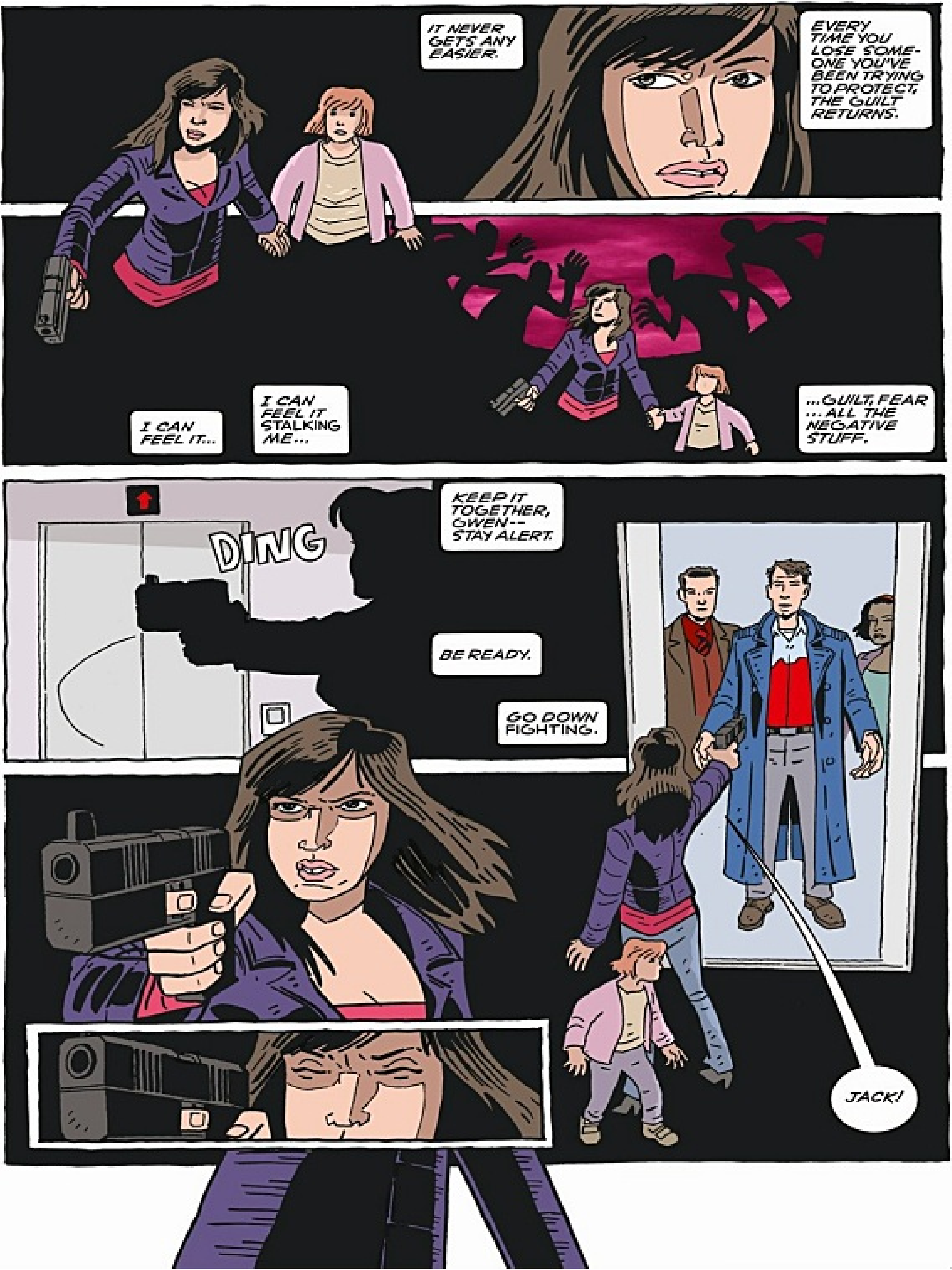
- WRITTEN BY NICK ABADZIS
- ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL GRIST
- COLORING BY PHIL ELLIOTT
- LETTERING BY JOHN WORKMAN

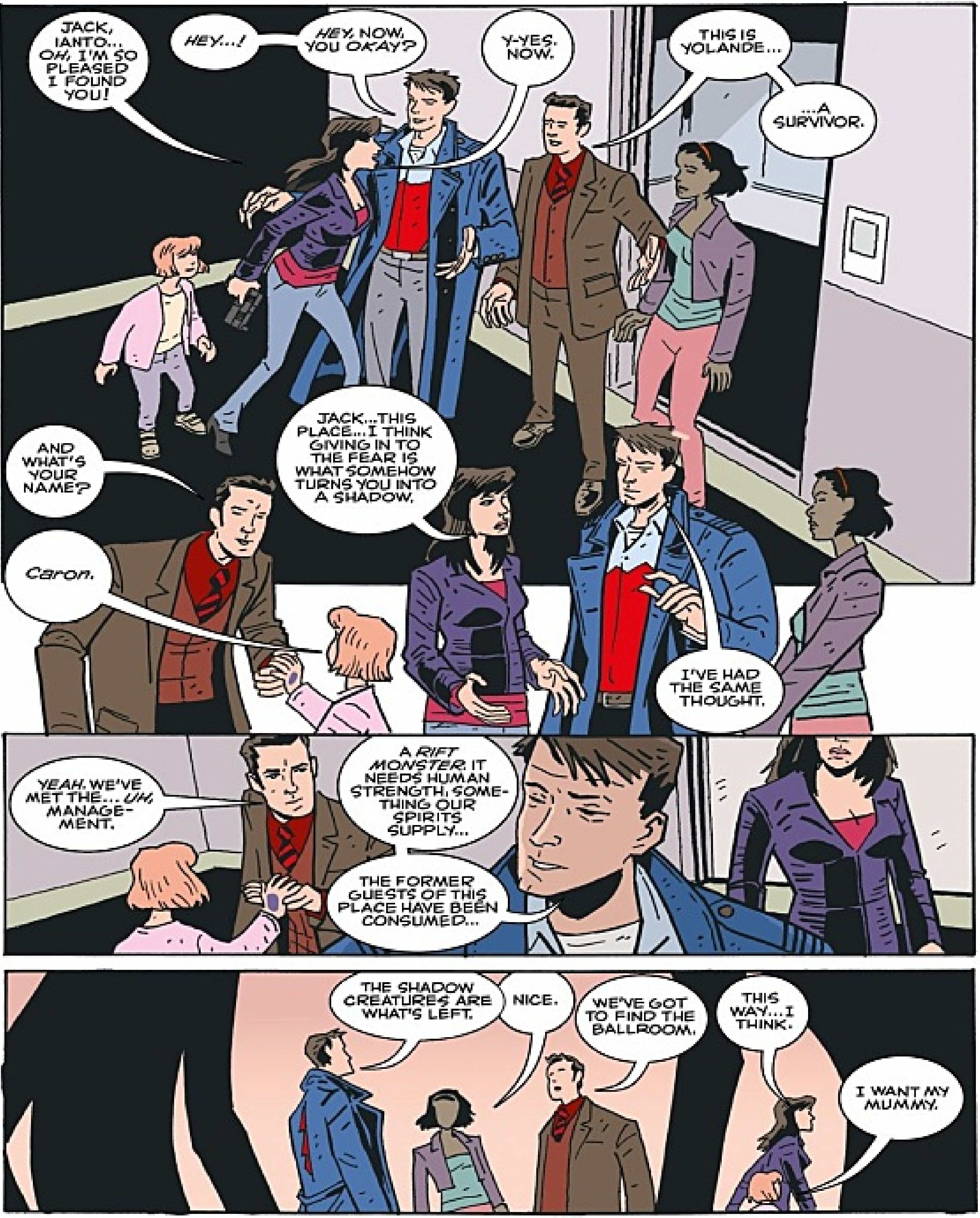
PART 4 OF 5

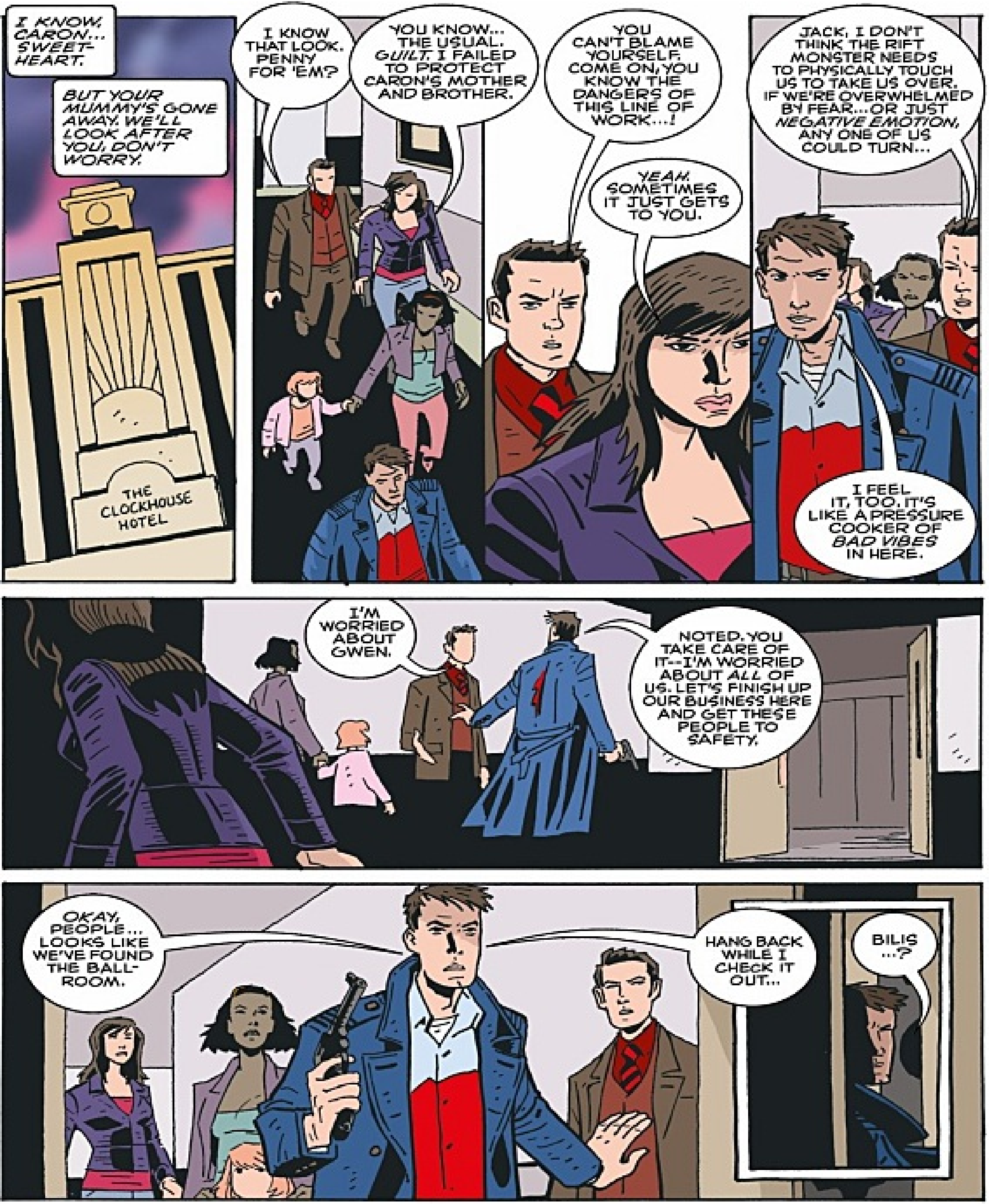

WE'RE PROFESSIONALS. WE GET THE JOB DONE, THROUGH PREPARATION AND KNOWLEDGE...
OR, FAILING THAT, AN ABILITY TO WING IT WITH AVAILABLE MATERIALS THAT ARE TO HAND.
JACK ALWAYS SAYS, CHECK YOUR ENVIRONMENT-SEE WHAT CAN BE USED TO MAKE A WEAPON IF YOU'RE PINNED DOWN...
BOOOOMF
BE IMAGINATIVE, INVENTIVE. DO SOMETHING UNEXPECTED TO THROW YOUR ENEMY OFF-GUARD.
I LIKE A PROPERLY STOCKED KITCHEN.
JUST IGNITE A LITTLE ETHANOL, AND, *HEY,* PRESTO--INSTANT FLAMBEED RIFT MONSTER!
THAT SHOULD KEEP IT BUSY FOR A WHILE.

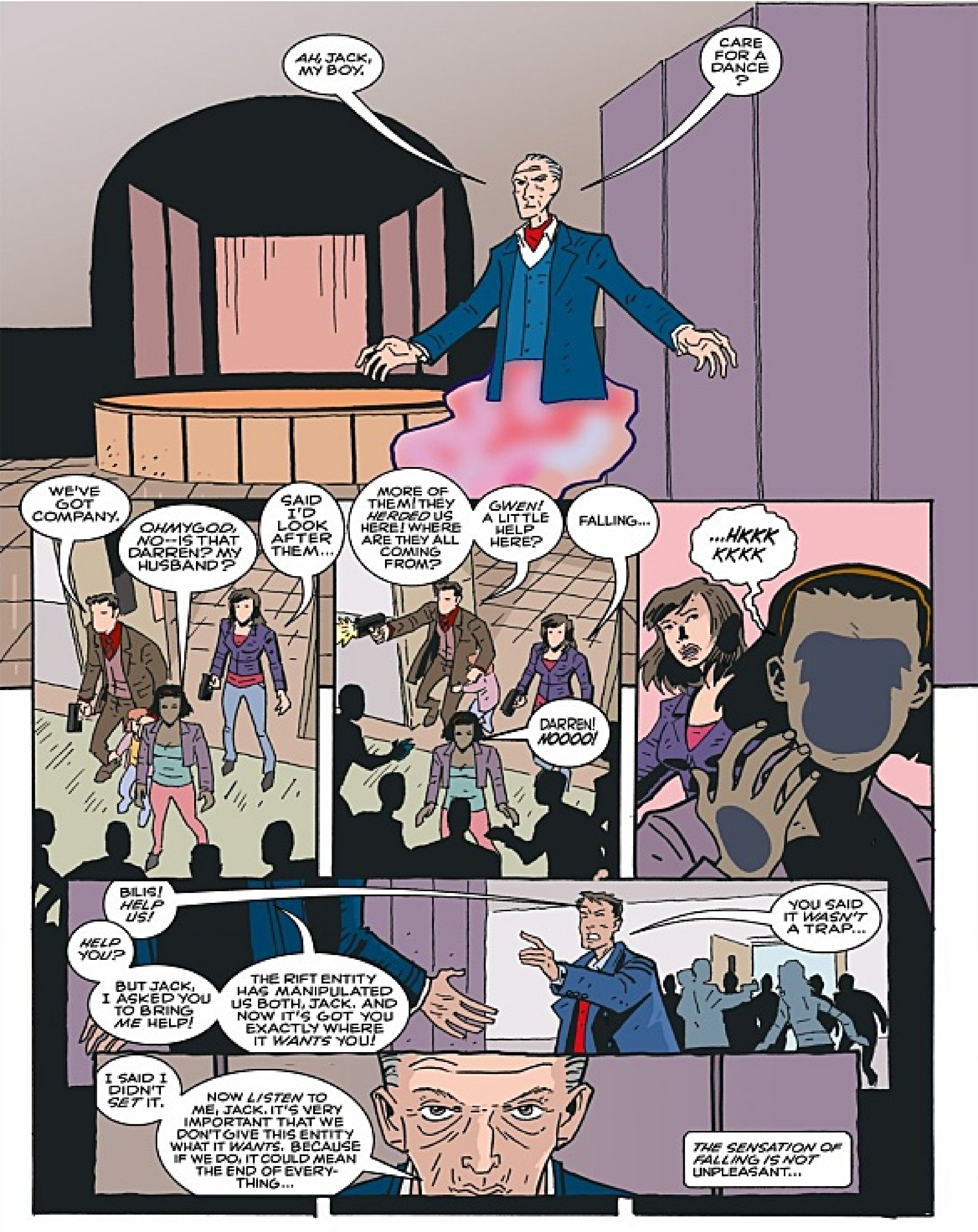

HOW DO WE KNOW THE BILIS WE SAW EARLIER ISN'T ALSO JUST A PUPPET OF THAT... THAT *RIFT MONSTER?*
JUST A HUNCH. THE REAL BILIS IS A BIT MORE ERUDITE THAN THE THINGS THE ...THE *RIFT MONSTER* MANIFESTED.
BILIS SAID THAT HE BUILT THIS HOTEL AS A CONTAINER FOR THE RIFT--A TEMPORAL *PRISON.*
AND THAT'S HOW IT MANIFESTS HERE-- AS THAT ENTITY.
YEAH, IT'S INTELLIGENT, IT CAN ACTIVATE SCREENS AND *MESS ABOUT* WITH THE ENVIRONMENT, BUT IT HASN'T FIGURED OUT HOW TO COMMUNICATE PROPERLY YET.
I THINK IT NEEDS THE REAL BILIS ALIVE TO ACT AS A *MESSENGER.*
SO WE STILL NEED TO FIND THIS GUY BILIS...?
IS HE THE *WAY OUT?*
YES. I'M VERY MUCH AFRAID THAT HE IS.
WE DON'T SEEM TO HAVE A CHOICE BUT TO CONTINUE LOOKING FOR HIM.
WHERE WOULD HE BE...?
JACK... YOLANDE...
YOU NEED TO SEE THIS...

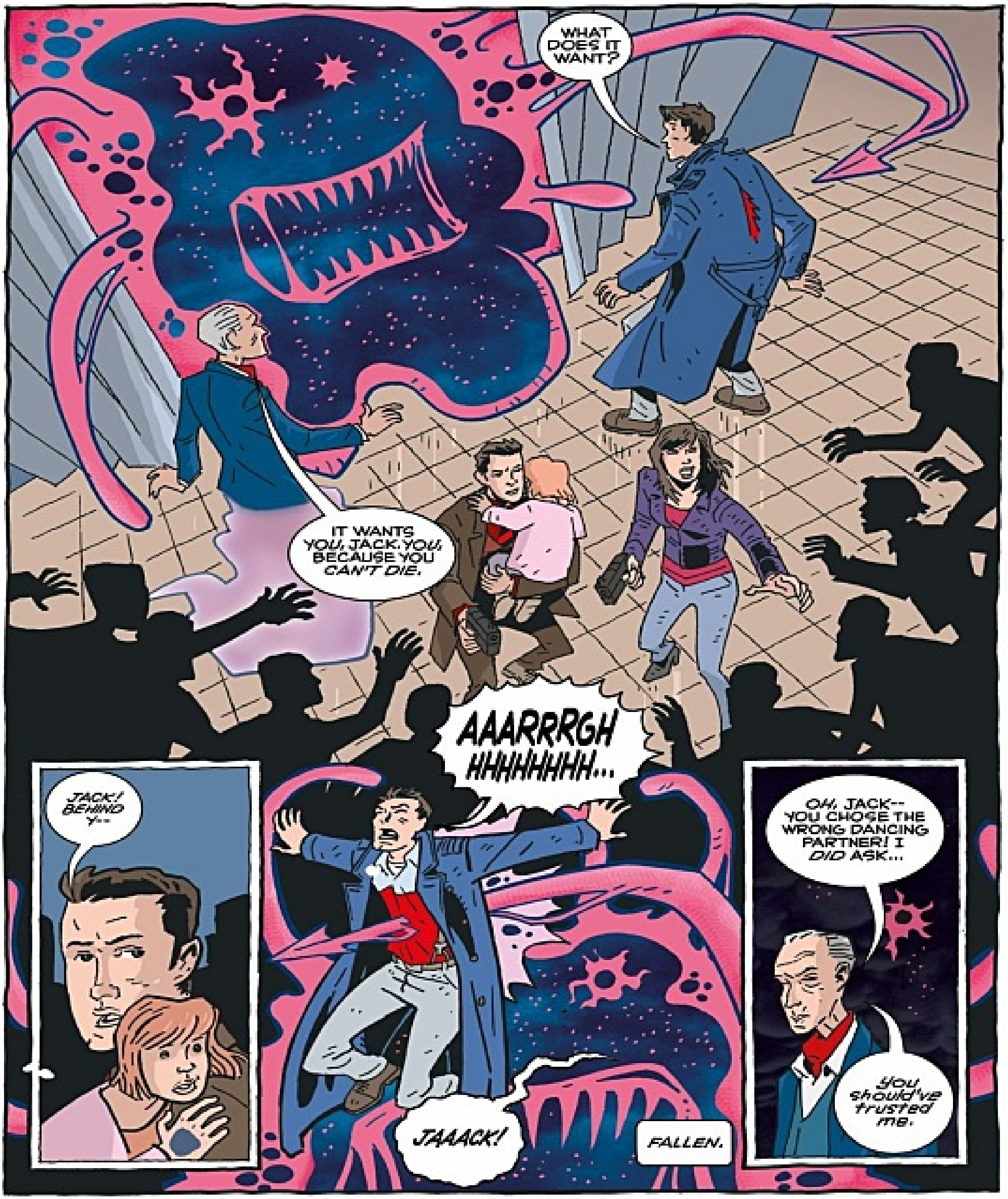

MY GOD--THE CITY!
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO IT?
IT'S NOT REAL. WHAT WE'RE SEEING IS A *POTENTIAL FUTURE* FOR CARDIFF--AND THE WORLD--IF THE RIFT *CONSCIOUSNESS* ESCAPES THIS HOTEL.
WE HAVE TO STOP THAT FROM HAPPENING.
LOOKS LIKE THE SHADOWS ARE ALL THAT WILL BE LEFT OF HUMANITY IN THIS FUTURE...
NOW LISTEN TO ME, YOU TWO. THIS THING *WANTS* YOU TO BE SCARED.
WELL, IT'S WORKING. I'M *SCARED*, BELIEVE ME. I JUST WANT TO FIND MY HUSBAND AND GET OUT OF THIS PLACE.
WE'VE GOT TO KEEP IT TOGETHER. NO PANICKING. JUST WATCH EACH OTHER'S BACKS, *OKAY?*
JACK, WHEN WE FIRST ENCOUNTERED BILIS, HE WAS THE CARETAKER OF AN OLD DANCE HALL. MAYBE HE'S GONE SOMEWHERE FAMILIAR...
IS THERE A *BALLROOM* IN HERE?
OFFICER THINKING, IANTO!
LET'S GO.

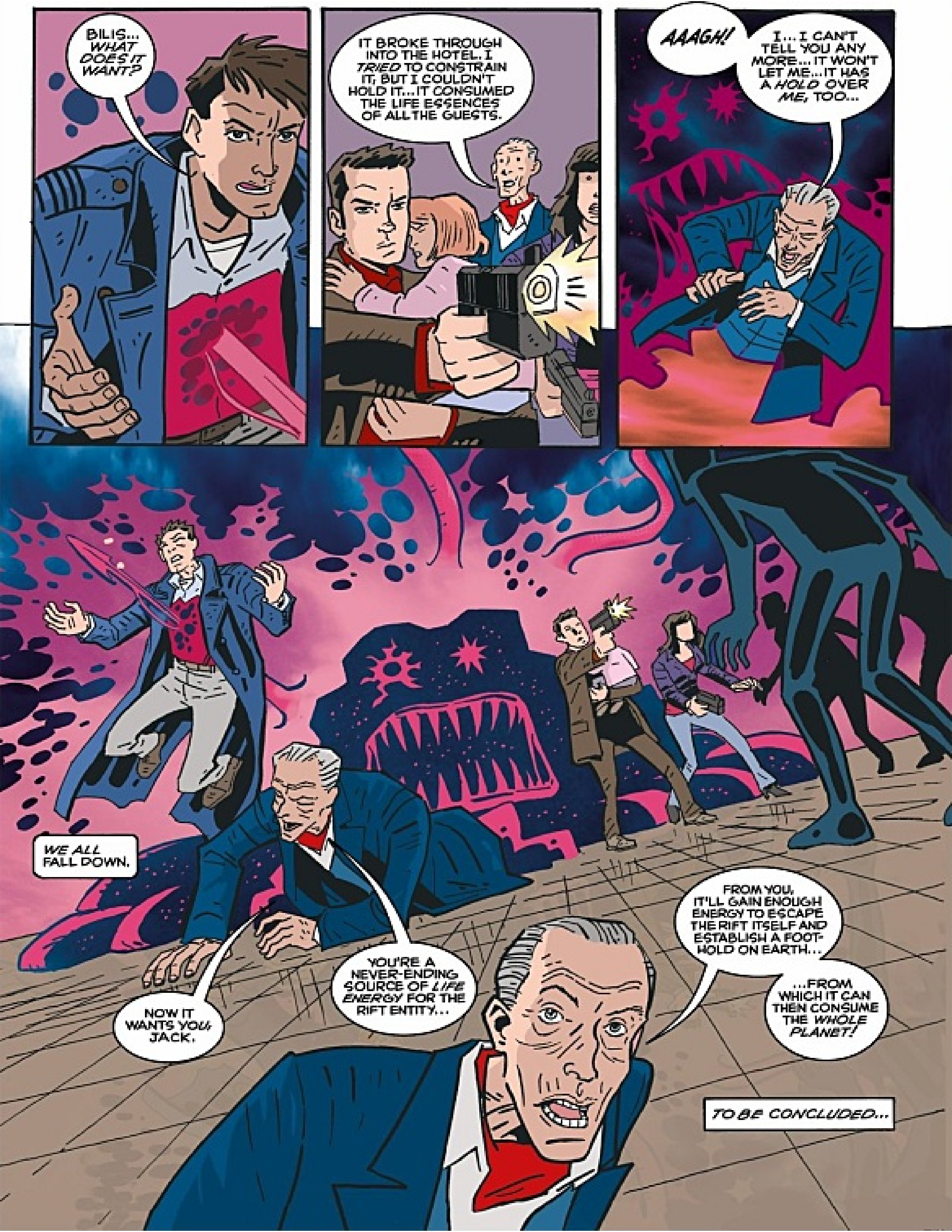

IT NEVER GETS ANY EASIER.
EVERY TIME YOU LOSE SOMEONE YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO PROTECT, THE GUILT RETURNS.
I CAN FEEL IT...
I CAN FEEL IT STALKING ME...
...GUILT, FEAR ... ALL THE NEGATIVE STUFF.
DING
KEEP IT TOGETHER, GWEN-- STAY ALERT.
BE READY.
GO DOWN FIGHTING.
JACK!

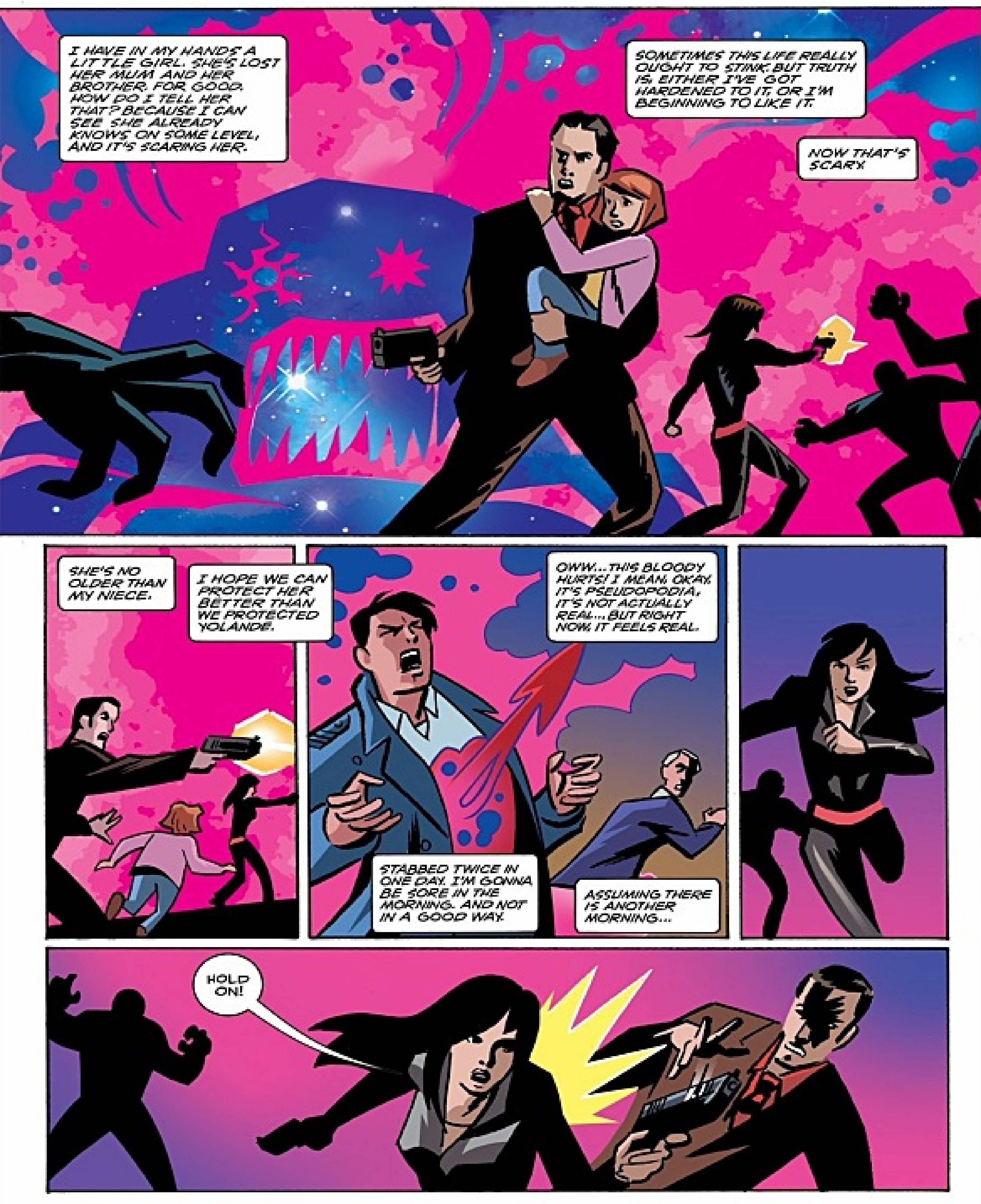

JACK, IANTO... OH, I'M SO PLEASED I FOUND YOU!
HEY...!
HEY, NOW. YOU OKAY?
Y-YES. NOW.
THIS IS YOLANDE...
...A SURVIVOR.
AND WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
JACK...THIS PLACE...I THINK GIVING IN TO THE FEAR IS WHAT SOMEHOW TURNS YOU INTO A SHADOW.
Caron.
I'VE HAD THE SAME THOUGHT.
YEAH, WE'VE MET THE... UH, MANAGEMENT.
A RIFT MONSTER. IT NEEDS HUMAN STRENGTH, SOMETHING OUR SPIRITS SUPPLY...
THE FORMER GUESTS OF THIS PLACE HAVE BEEN CONSUMED...
THE SHADOW CREATURES ARE WHAT'S LEFT.
NICE.
WE'VE GOT TO FIND THE BALLROOM.
THIS WAY...I THINK.
I WANT MY MUMMY.

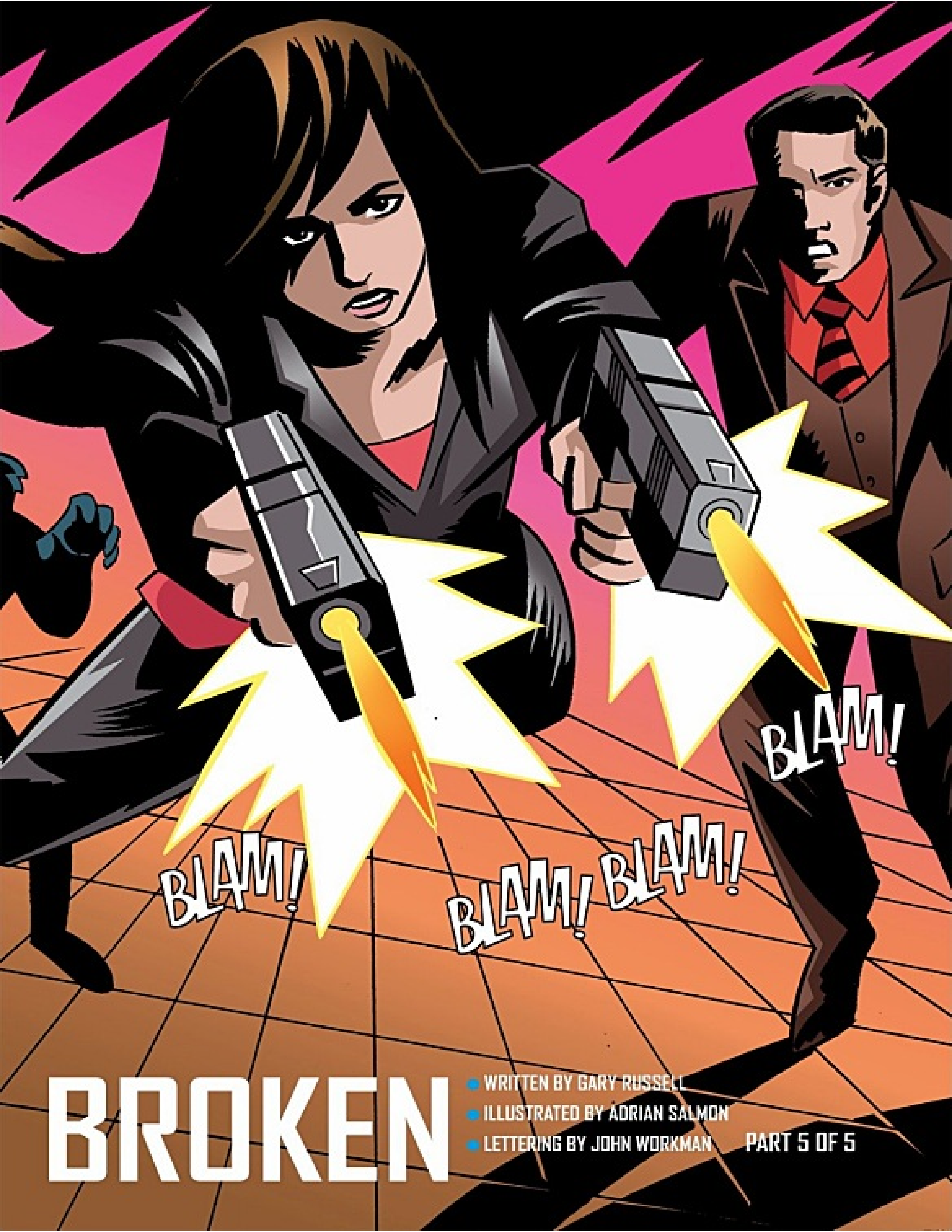

I KNOW, CARON... SWEET-HEART.
BUT YOUR MUMMY'S GONE AWAY. WE'LL LOOK AFTER YOU, DON'T WORRY.
THE CLOCKHOUSE HOTEL
I KNOW THAT LOOK. PENNY FOR 'EM?
YOU KNOW... THE USUAL. *GUILT.* I FAILED TO PROTECT CARON'S MOTHER AND BROTHER.
YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF. COME ON, YOU KNOW THE DANGERS OF THIS LINE OF WORK...!
YEAH. SOMETIMES IT JUST GETS TO YOU.
JACK, I DON'T THINK THE RIFT MONSTER NEEDS TO PHYSICALLY TOUCH US TO TAKE US OVER. IF WE'RE OVERWHELMED BY FEAR...OR JUST *NEGATIVE EMOTION*, ANY ONE OF US COULD TURN...
I FEEL IT, TOO. IT'S LIKE A PRESSURE COOKER OF *BAD VIBES* IN HERE.
I'M WORRIED ABOUT GWEN.
NOTED. YOU TAKE CARE OF IT--I'M WORRIED ABOUT *ALL* OF US. LET'S FINISH UP OUR BUSINESS HERE AND GET THESE PEOPLE TO SAFETY.
OKAY, PEOPLE... LOOKS LIKE WE'VE FOUND THE BALL-ROOM.
HANG BACK WHILE I CHECK IT OUT...
BILIS ...?


AH, JACK, MY BOY.
CARE FOR A DANCE?
WE'VE GOT COMPANY.
OHMYGOD, NO--IS THAT DARREN? MY HUSBAND?
SAID I'D LOOK AFTER THEM...
MORE OF THEM! THEY *HERDED* US HERE! WHERE ARE THEY ALL COMING FROM?
GWEN! A LITTLE HELP HERE?
FALLING...
DARREN! *NOOOO!*
...HKKK KKKK
BILIS! *HELP US!*
YOU SAID IT *WASN'T* A TRAP...
HELP YOU?
BUT JACK, I ASKED YOU TO BRING *ME* HELP!
THE RIFT ENTITY HAS MANIPULATED US BOTH, JACK. AND NOW IT'S GOT YOU EXACTLY WHERE IT *WANTS* YOU!
I SAID I DIDN'T *SET* IT.
NOW *LISTEN* TO ME, JACK. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT WE DON'T GIVE THIS ENTITY WHAT IT *WANTS*. BECAUSE IF WE DO, IT COULD MEAN THE END OF EVERYTHING...
THE SENSATION OF FALLING IS NOT UNPLEASANT...


WHAT DOES IT WANT?
IT WANTS *YOU*, JACK. *YOU*, BECAUSE YOU *CAN'T DIE*.
AAARRRGH HHHHHHHH...
JACK! BEHIND Y--
JAAACK!
FALLEN.
OH, JACK-- YOU CHOSE THE WRONG DANCING PARTNER! I *DID* ASK...
You should've trusted me.


BILIS... *WHAT DOES IT WANT?*
IT BROKE THROUGH INTO THE HOTEL. I *TRIED* TO CONSTRAIN IT, BUT I COULDN'T HOLD IT... IT CONSUMED THE LIFE ESSENCES OF ALL THE GUESTS.
AAAGH!
I... I CAN'T TELL YOU ANY MORE... IT WON'T LET ME... IT HAS A *HOLD OVER ME*, TOO...
WE ALL FALL DOWN.
NOW IT WANTS YOU, JACK.
YOU'RE A NEVER-ENDING SOURCE OF *LIFE ENERGY* FOR THE RIFT ENTITY...
FROM YOU, IT'LL GAIN ENOUGH ENERGY TO ESCAPE THE RIFT ITSELF AND ESTABLISH A FOOT-HOLD ON EARTH...
...FROM WHICH IT CAN THEN CONSUME THE *WHOLE PLANET!*
TO BE CONCLUDED...

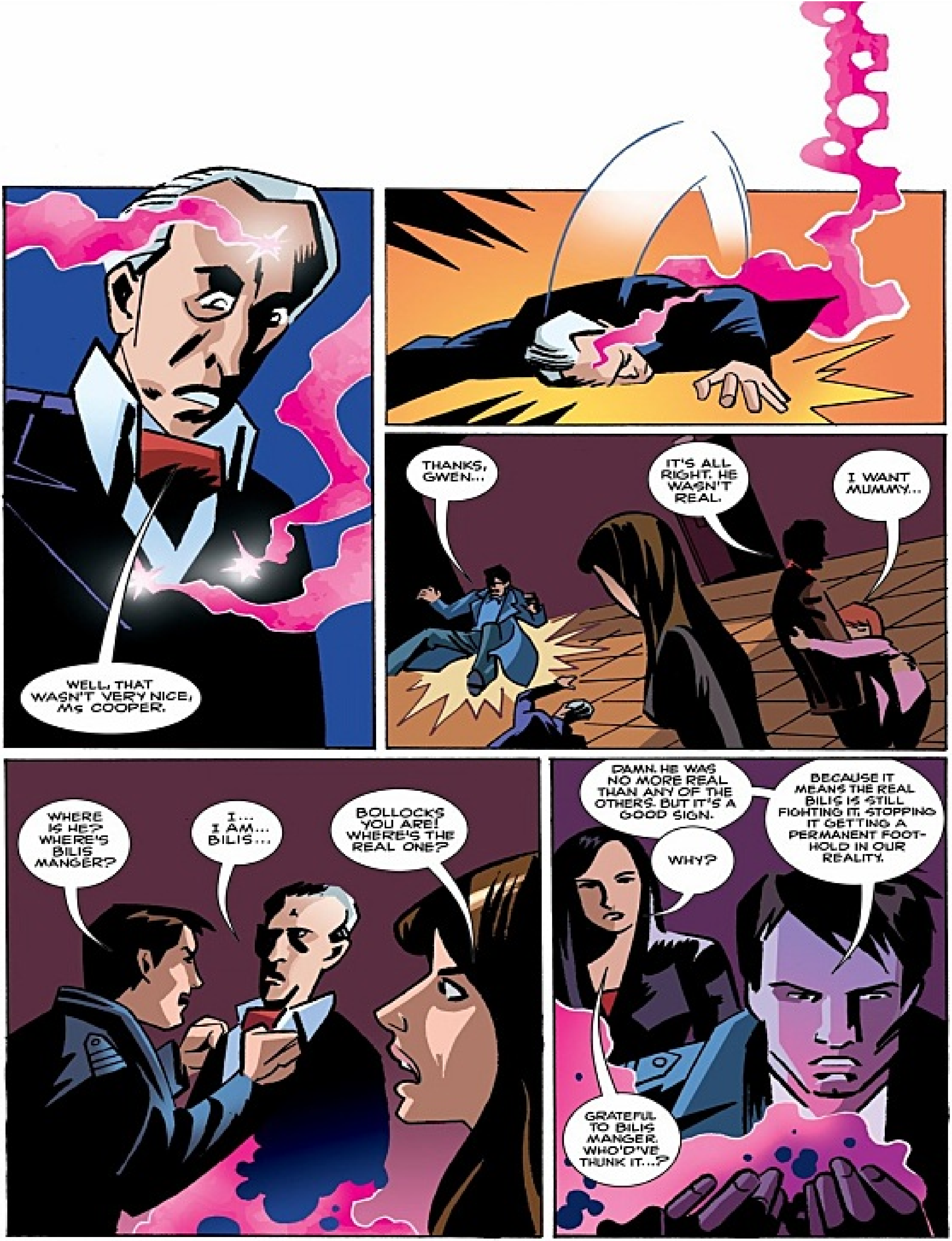

I HAVE IN MY HANDS A LITTLE GIRL. SHE'S LOST HER MUM AND HER BROTHER. FOR GOOD. HOW DO I TELL HER THAT? BECAUSE I CAN SEE SHE ALREADY KNOWS ON SOME LEVEL, AND IT'S SCARING HER.
SOMETIMES THIS LIFE REALLY OUGHT TO STINK. BUT TRUTH IS, EITHER I'VE GOT HARDENED TO IT, OR I'M BEGINNING TO LIKE IT.
NOW THAT'S SCARY.
SHE'S NO OLDER THAN MY NIECE.
I HOPE WE CAN PROTECT HER BETTER THAN WE PROTECTED YOLANDE.
OWW... THIS BLOODY HURTS! I MEAN, OKAY, IT'S PSEUDOPODIA. IT'S NOT ACTUALLY REAL... BUT RIGHT NOW, IT FEELS REAL.
STABBED TWICE IN ONE DAY. I'M GONNA BE SORE IN THE MORNING. AND NOT IN A GOOD WAY.
ASSUMING THERE IS ANOTHER MORNING...
HOLD ON!

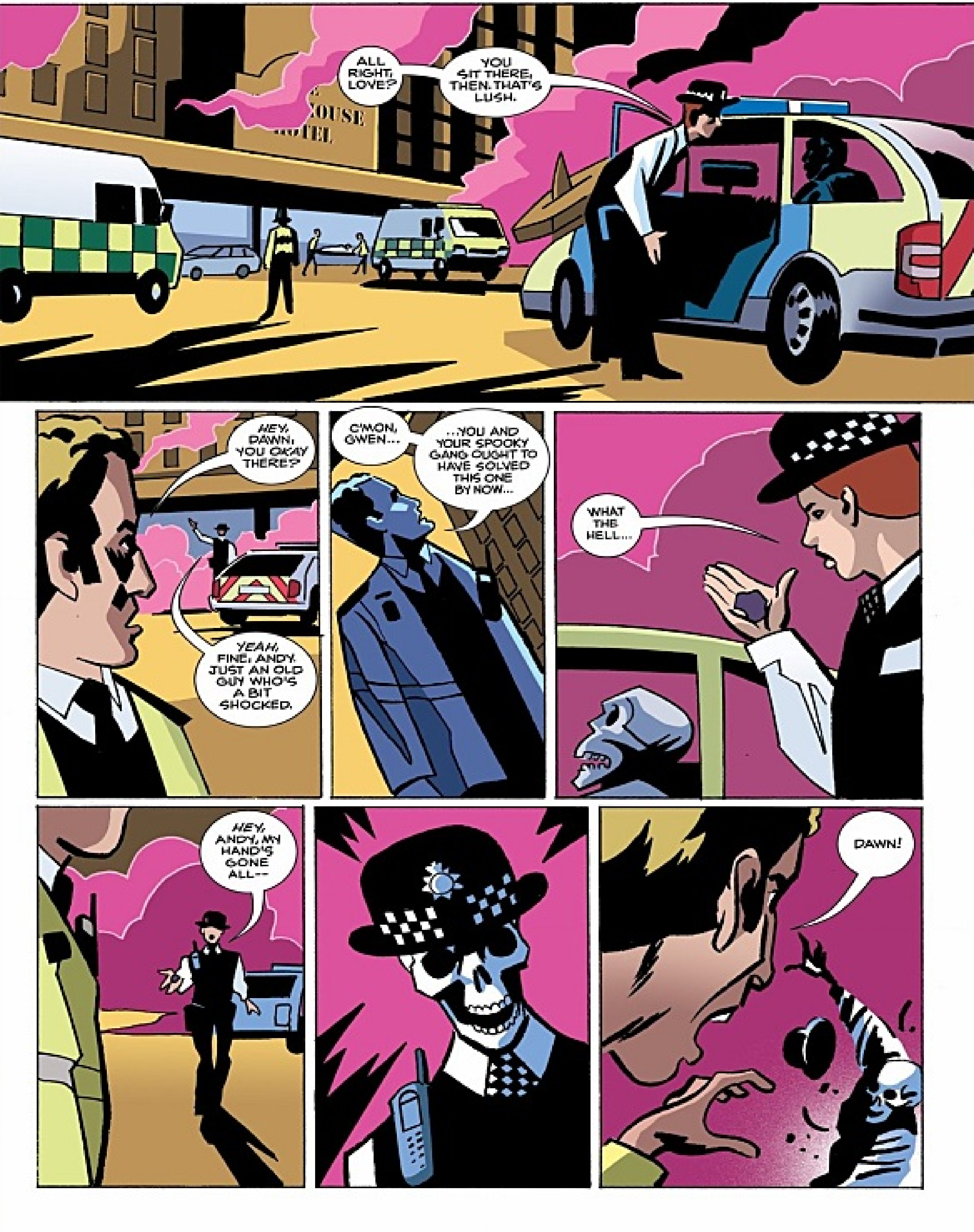

BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!

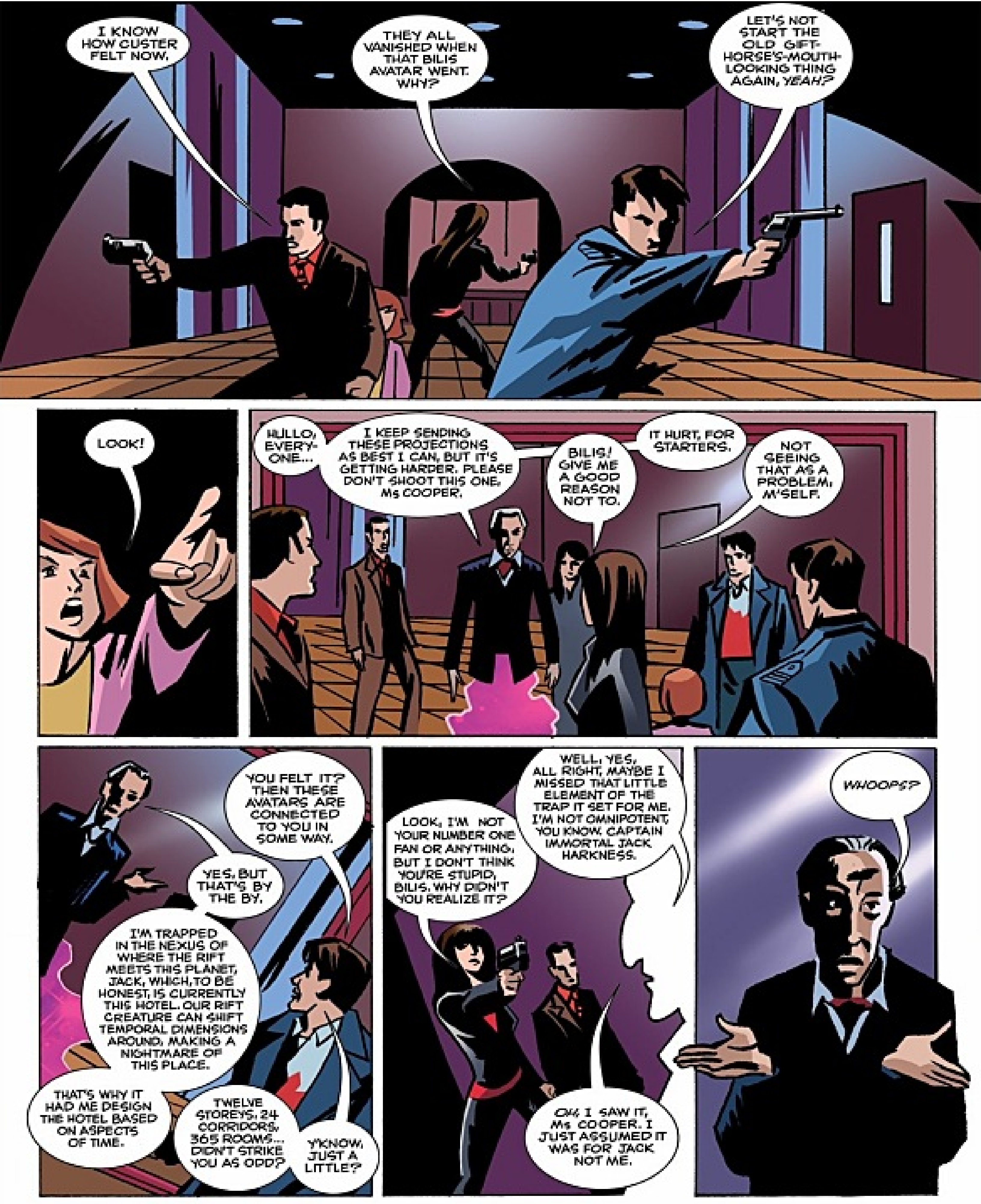
BROKEN

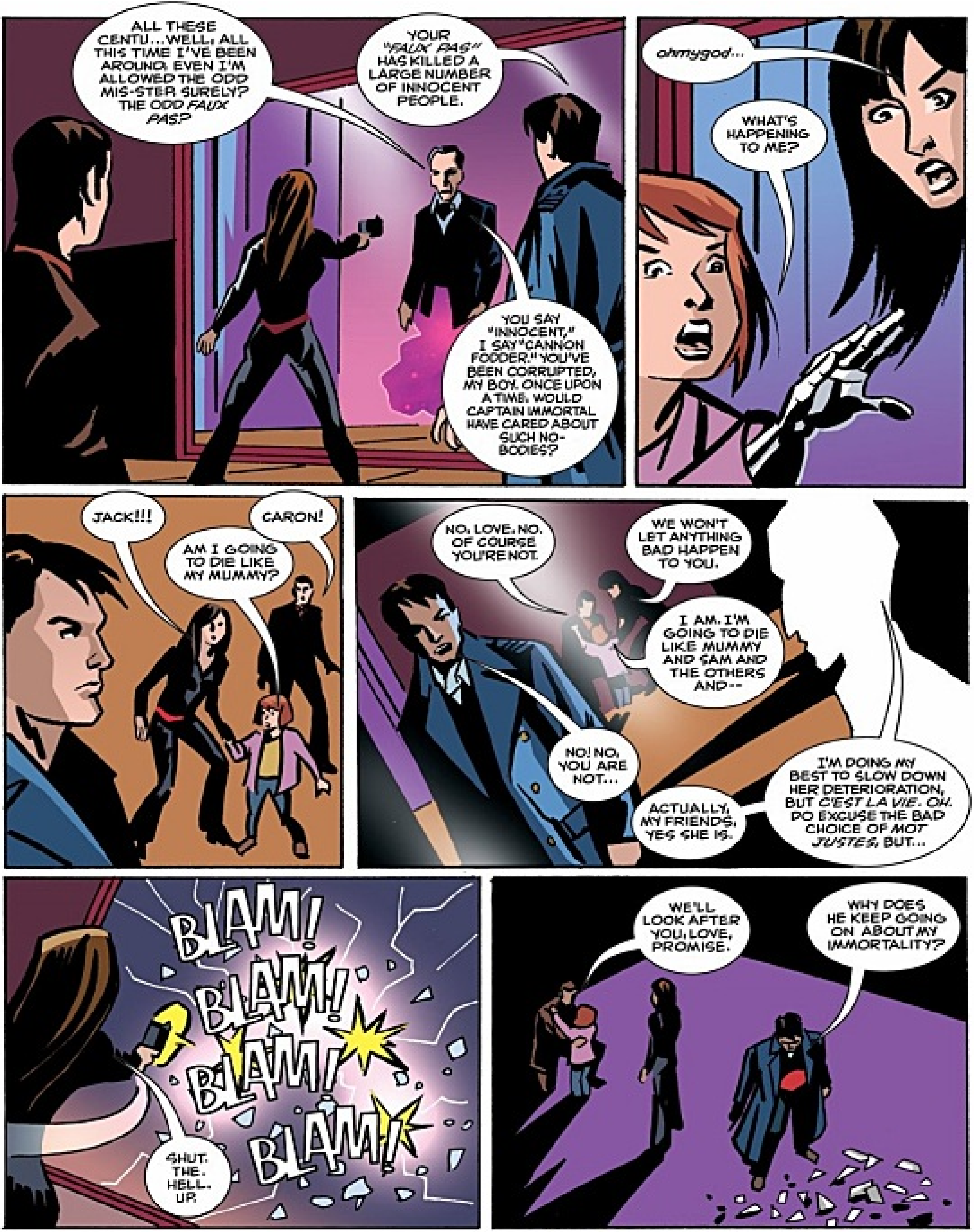
WRITTEN BY GARY RUSSELL
ILLUSTRATED BY ADRIAN SALMON
LETTERING BY JOHN WORKMAN

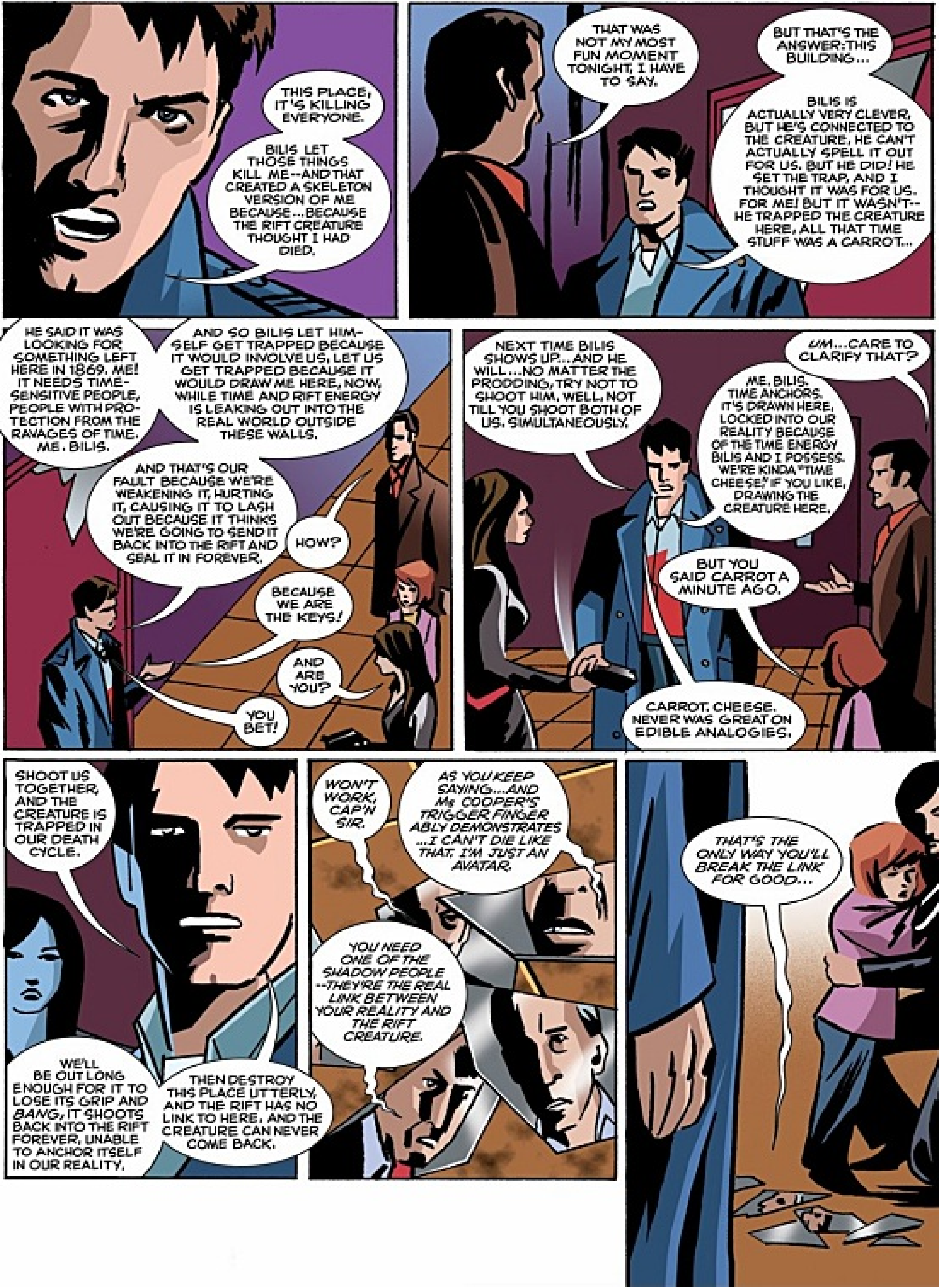
PART 5 OF 5

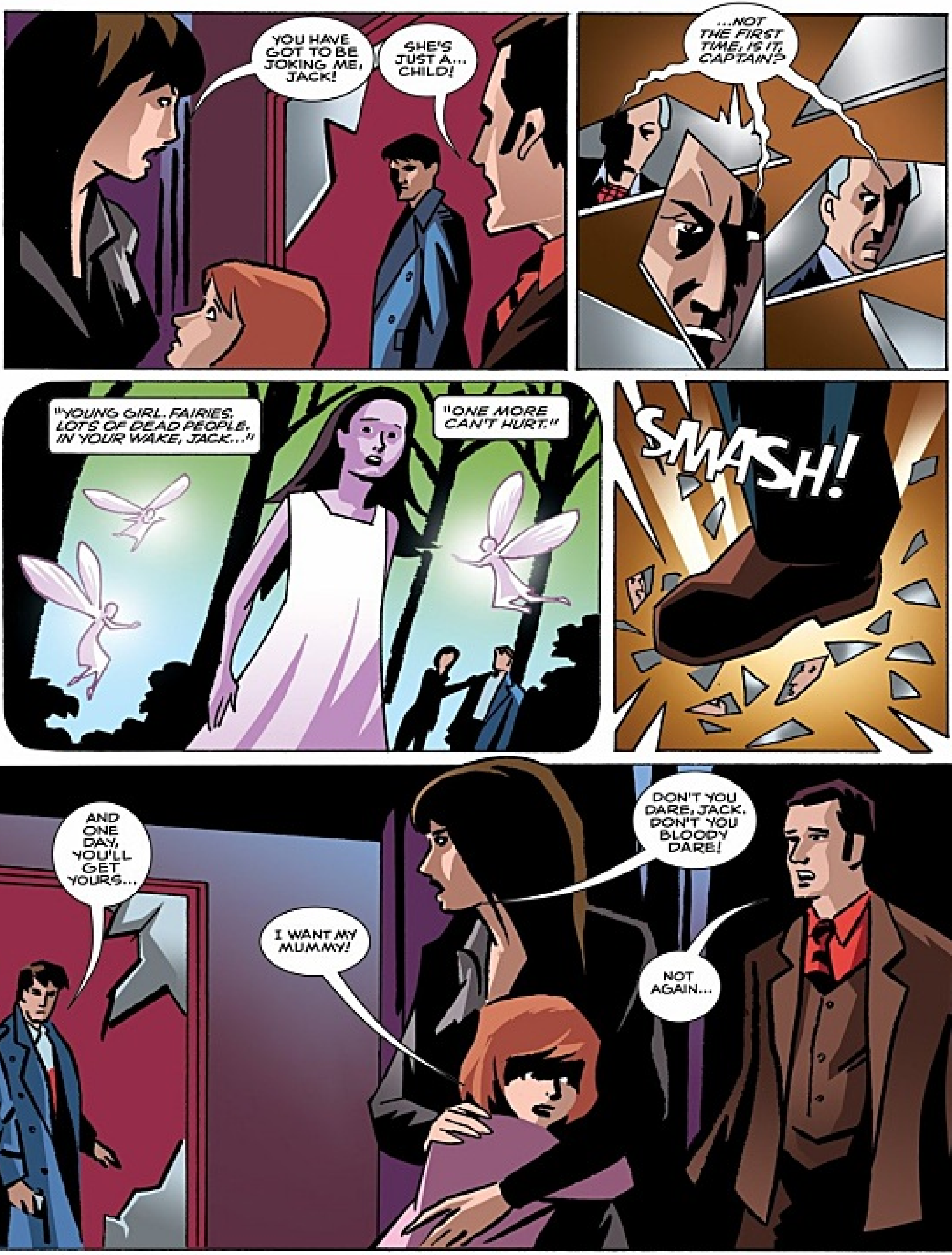

WELL, THAT WASN'T VERY NICE, MS COOPER.
THANKS, GWEN...
IT'S ALL RIGHT. HE WASN'T REAL.
I WANT MUMMY...
WHERE IS HE? WHERE'S BILIS MANGER?
I... I AM... BILIS...
BOLLOCKS YOU ARE! WHERE'S THE REAL ONE?
DAMN. HE WAS NO MORE REAL THAN ANY OF THE OTHERS. BUT IT'S A GOOD SIGN.
WHY?
BECAUSE IT MEANS THE REAL BILIS IS STILL FIGHTING IT, STOPPING IT GETTING A PERMANENT FOOT-HOLD IN OUR REALITY.
GRATEFUL TO BILIS MANGER. WHO'D'VE THUNK IT...?

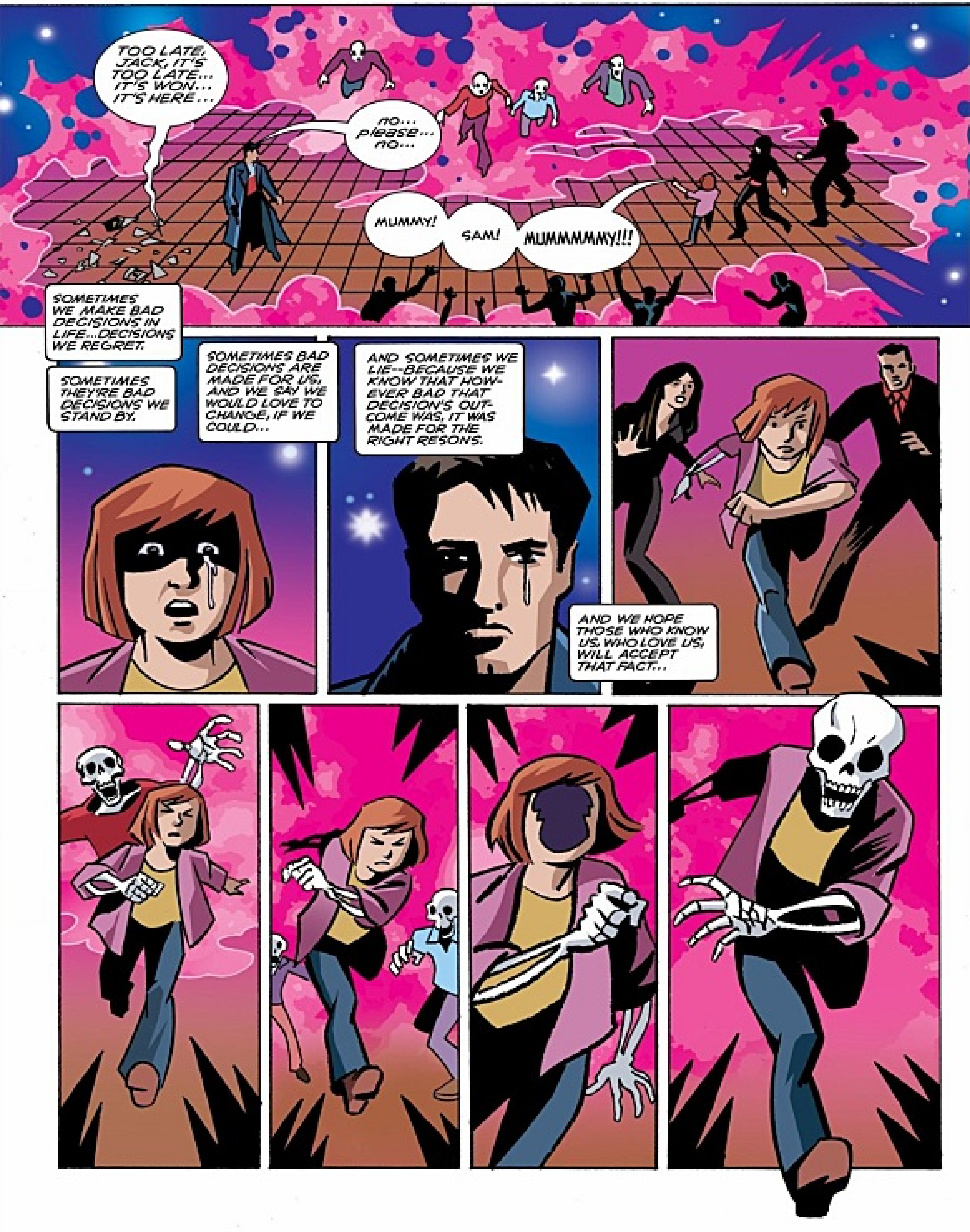

ALL RIGHT, LOVE?
YOU SIT THERE, THEN. THAT'S LUSH.
HEY, DAWN, YOU OKAY THERE?
YEAH, FINE, ANDY. JUST AN OLD GUY WHO'S A BIT SHOCKED.
C'MON, GWEN...
...YOU AND YOUR SPOOKY GANG OUGHT TO HAVE SOLVED THIS ONE BY NOW...
WHAT THE HELL...
HEY, ANDY, MY HAND'S GONE ALL--
DAWN!

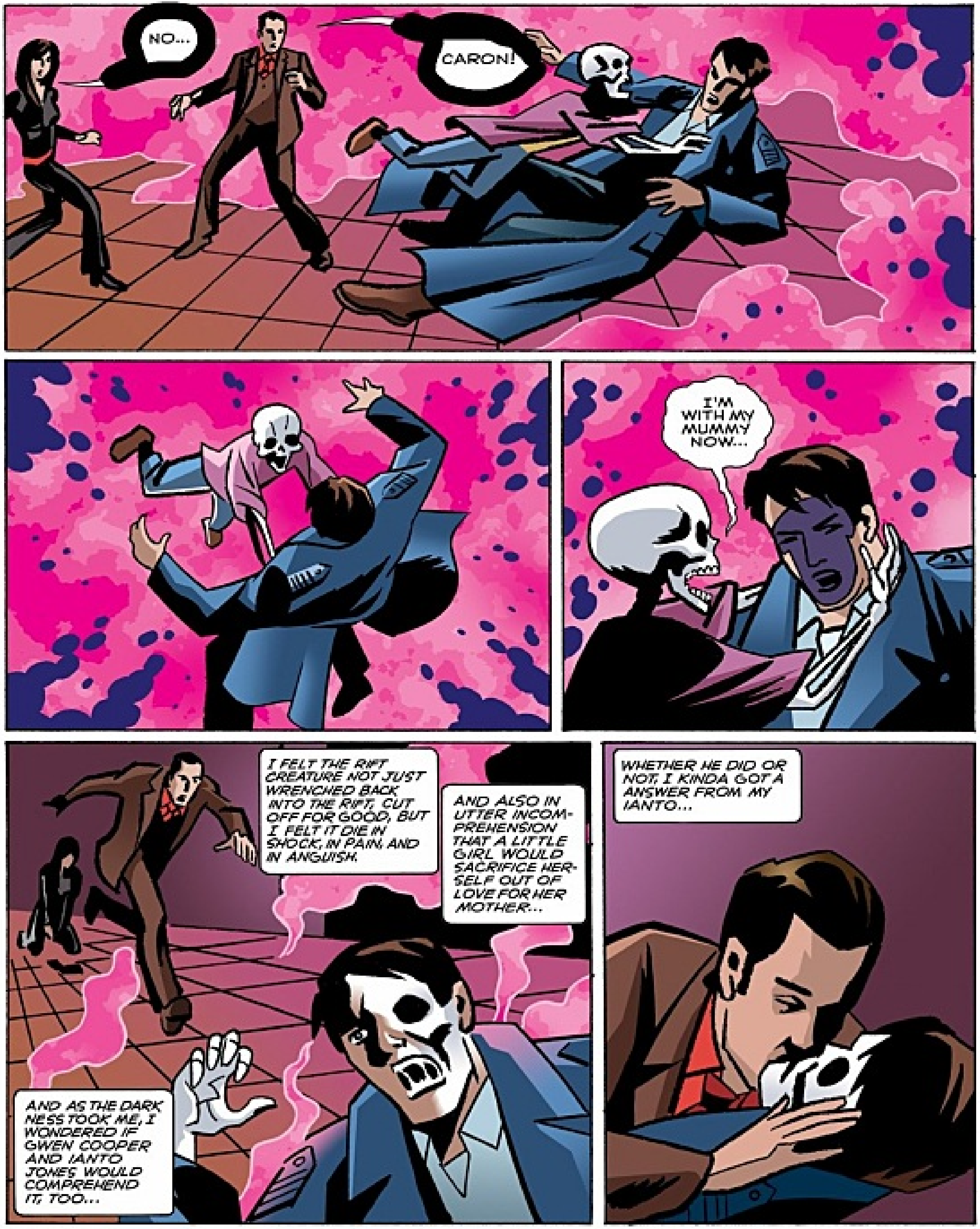

I KNOW HOW CUSTER FELT NOW.
THEY ALL VANISHED WHEN THAT BILIS AVATAR WENT. WHY?
LET'S NOT START THE OLD GIFT-HORSE'S-MOUTH-LOOKING THING AGAIN, *YEAH?*
LOOK!
HULLO, EVERYONE...
I KEEP SENDING THESE PROJECTIONS AS BEST I CAN, BUT IT'S GETTING HARDER. PLEASE DON'T SHOOT THIS ONE, Ms COOPER.
BILIS! GIVE ME A GOOD REASON NOT TO.
IT HURT, FOR STARTERS.
NOT SEEING THAT AS A PROBLEM, M'SELF.
YOU FELT IT? THEN THESE AVATARS ARE CONNECTED TO YOU IN SOME WAY.
YES. BUT THAT'S BY THE BY.
I'M TRAPPED IN THE NEXUS OF WHERE THE RIFT MEETS THIS PLANET, JACK, WHICH, TO BE HONEST, IS CURRENTLY THIS HOTEL. OUR RIFT CREATURE CAN SHIFT TEMPORAL DIMENSIONS AROUND, MAKING A NIGHTMARE OF THIS PLACE.
THAT'S WHY IT HAD ME DESIGN THE HOTEL BASED ON ASPECTS OF TIME.
TWELVE STOREYS, 24 CORRIDORS, 365 ROOMS... DIDN'T STRIKE YOU AS ODD?
Y'KNOW, JUST A LITTLE?
LOOK, I'M NOT YOUR NUMBER ONE FAN OR ANYTHING, BUT I DON'T THINK YOU'RE STUPID, BILIS. WHY DIDN'T YOU REALIZE IT?
WELL, YES, ALL RIGHT, MAYBE I MISSED THAT LITTLE ELEMENT OF THE TRAP IT SET FOR ME. I'M NOT OMNIPOTENT, YOU KNOW. CAPTAIN IMMORTAL JACK HARKNESS.
OH, I SAW IT, Ms COOPER. I JUST ASSUMED IT WAS FOR JACK NOT ME.
WHOOPS?

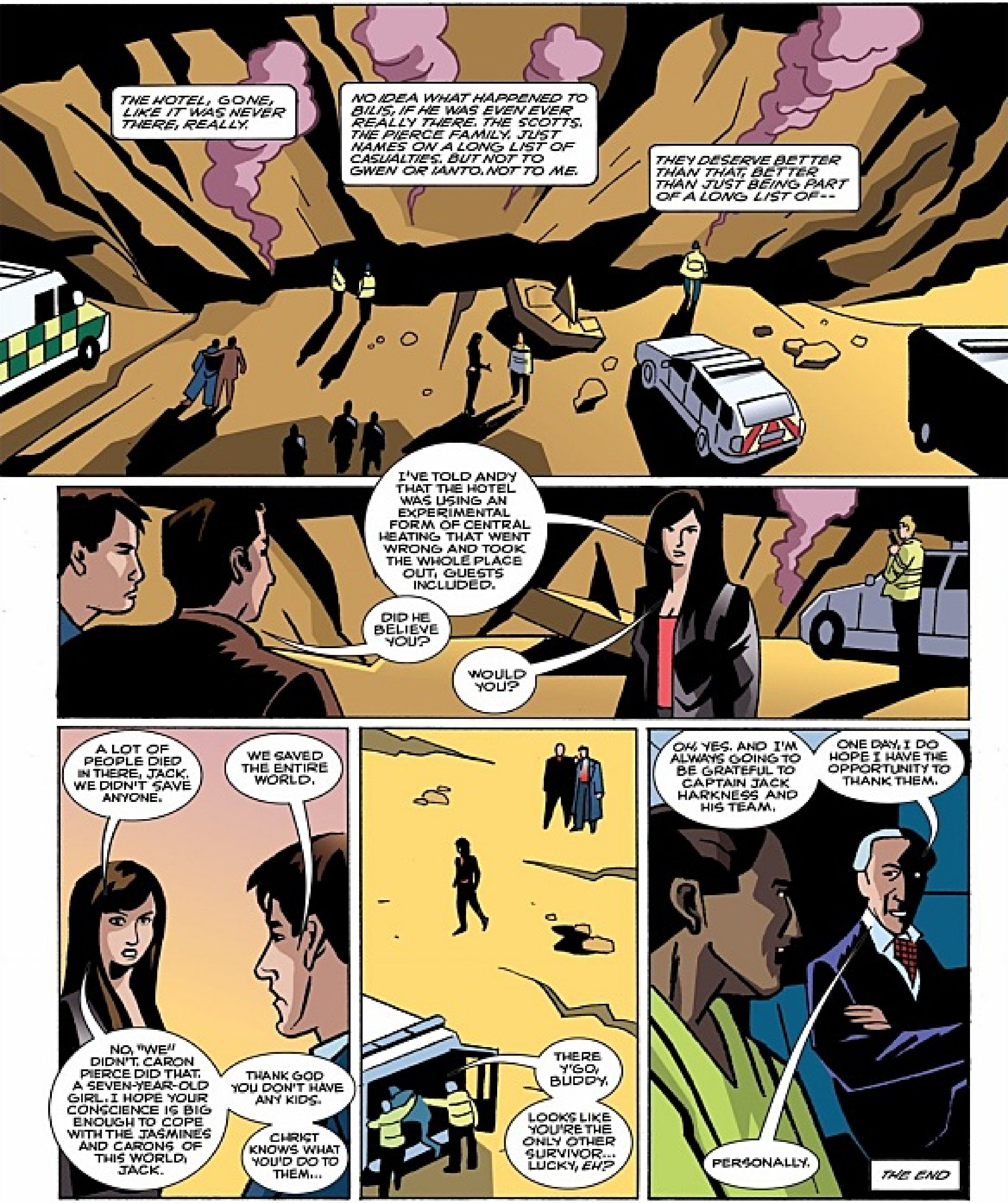

ALL THESE CENTU... WELL, ALL THIS TIME I'VE BEEN AROUND. EVEN I'M ALLOWED THE ODD MIS-STEP SURELY? THE ODD *FAUX PAS*?
YOUR *"FAUX PAS"* HAS KILLED A LARGE NUMBER OF INNOCENT PEOPLE.
YOU SAY "INNOCENT," I SAY "CANNON FODDER." YOU'VE BEEN CORRUPTED, *MY BOY.* ONCE UPON A TIME, WOULD CAPTAIN IMMORTAL HAVE CARED ABOUT SUCH NO-BODIES?
ohmygod...
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
JACK!!!
CARON!
AM I GOING TO DIE LIKE MY MUMMY?
NO, LOVE, NO, OF COURSE YOU'RE NOT.
WE WON'T LET ANYTHING BAD HAPPEN TO YOU.
I AM. I'M GOING TO DIE LIKE MUMMY AND SAM AND THE OTHERS AND--
NO! NO, YOU ARE NOT...
ACTUALLY, MY FRIENDS, YES SHE IS.
I'M DOING *MY* BEST TO SLOW DOWN HER DETERIORATION, BUT *C'EST LA VIE. OH,* DO EXCUSE THE BAD CHOICE OF *MOT JUSTES*, BUT...
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
SHUT. THE. HELL. UP.
WE'LL LOOK AFTER YOU, LOVE, PROMISE.
WHY DOES HE KEEP GOING ON ABOUT MY IMMORTALITY?

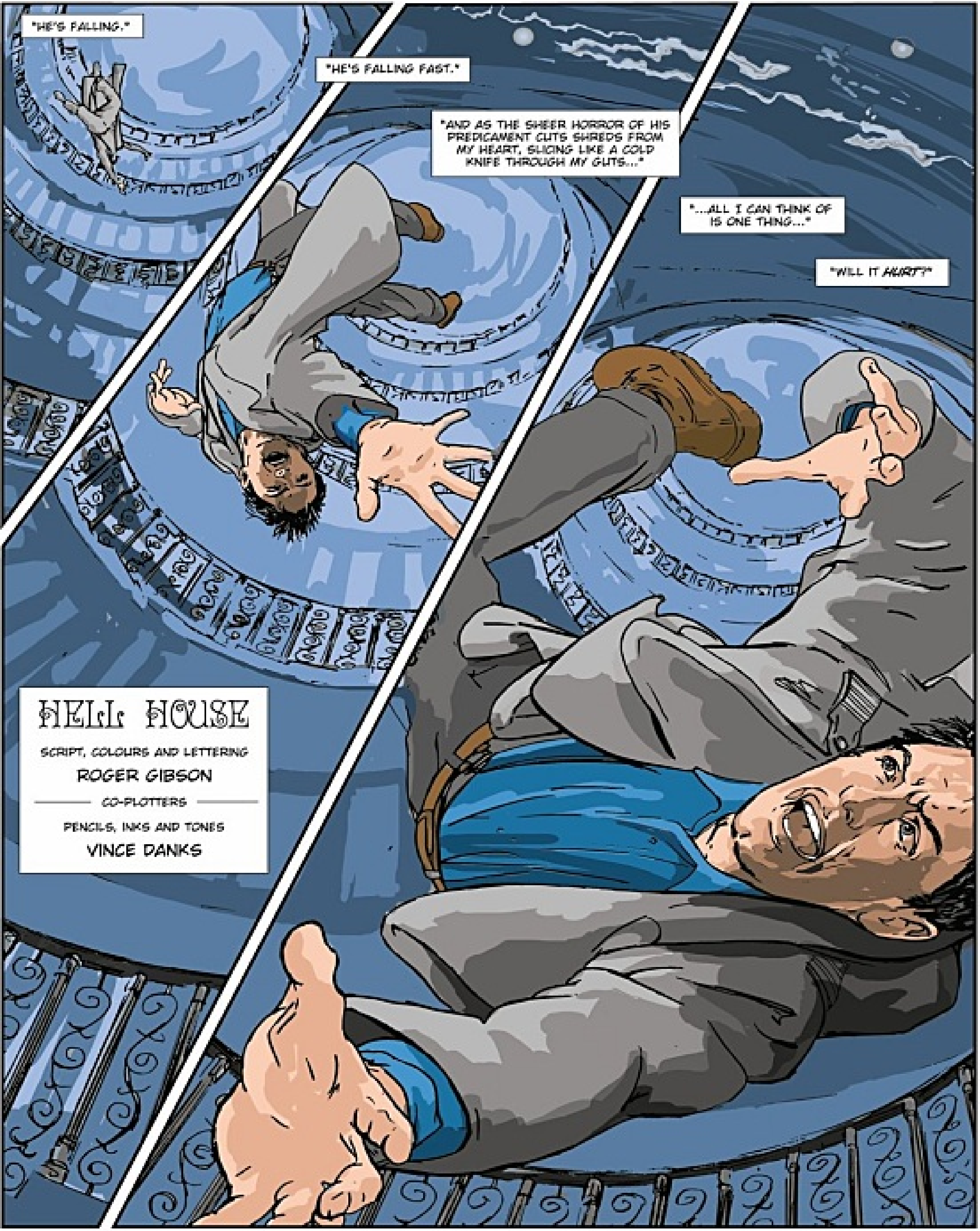

THIS PLACE, IT'S KILLING EVERYONE.
BILIS LET THOSE THINGS KILL ME--AND THAT CREATED A SKELETON VERSION OF ME BECAUSE... BECAUSE THE RIFT CREATURE THOUGHT I HAD DIED.
THAT WAS NOT MY MOST FUN MOMENT TONIGHT, I HAVE TO SAY.
BUT THAT'S THE ANSWER: THIS BUILDING...
BILIS IS ACTUALLY VERY CLEVER, BUT HE'S CONNECTED TO THE CREATURE. HE CAN'T ACTUALLY SPELL IT OUT FOR US. BUT HE DID! HE SET THE TRAP, AND I THOUGHT IT WAS FOR US. FOR ME! BUT IT WASN'T-- HE TRAPPED THE CREATURE HERE. ALL THAT TIME STUFF WAS A CARROT...
HE SAID IT WAS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING LEFT HERE IN 1869. ME! IT NEEDS TIME-SENSITIVE PEOPLE, PEOPLE WITH PROTECTION FROM THE RAVAGES OF TIME. ME. BILIS.
AND SO BILIS LET HIMSELF GET TRAPPED BECAUSE IT WOULD INVOLVE US, LET US GET TRAPPED BECAUSE IT WOULD DRAW ME HERE. NOW, WHILE TIME AND RIFT ENERGY IS LEAKING OUT INTO THE REAL WORLD OUTSIDE THESE WALLS.
AND THAT'S OUR FAULT BECAUSE WE'RE WEAKENING IT, HURTING IT, CAUSING IT TO LASH OUT BECAUSE IT THINKS WE'RE GOING TO SEND IT BACK INTO THE RIFT AND SEAL IT IN FOREVER.
HOW?
BECAUSE WE ARE THE KEYS!
AND ARE YOU?
YOU BET!
NEXT TIME BILIS SHOWS UP... AND HE WILL... NO MATTER THE PRODDING, TRY NOT TO SHOOT HIM. WELL, NOT TILL YOU SHOOT BOTH OF US. SIMULTANEOUSLY.
UM... CARE TO CLARIFY THAT?
ME. BILIS. TIME ANCHORS. IT'S DRAWN HERE, LOCKED INTO OUR REALITY BECAUSE OF THE TIME ENERGY BILIS AND I POSSESS. WE'RE KINDA "TIME CHEESE," IF YOU LIKE, DRAWING THE CREATURE HERE.
BUT YOU SAID CARROT A MINUTE AGO.
CARROT. CHEESE. NEVER WAS GREAT ON EDIBLE ANALOGIES.
SHOOT US TOGETHER, AND THE CREATURE IS TRAPPED IN OUR DEATH CYCLE.
WE'LL BE OUT LONG ENOUGH FOR IT TO LOSE ITS GRIP AND *BANG*, IT SHOOTS BACK INTO THE RIFT FOREVER, UNABLE TO ANCHOR ITSELF IN OUR REALITY.
THEN DESTROY THIS PLACE UTTERLY, AND THE RIFT HAS NO LINK TO HERE. AND THE CREATURE CAN NEVER COME BACK.
WON'T WORK, CAP'N SIR.
AS YOU KEEP SAYING... AND Ms COOPER'S TRIGGER FINGER ABLY DEMONSTRATES ... I CAN'T DIE LIKE THAT. I'M JUST AN AVATAR.
YOU NEED ONE OF THE SHADOW PEOPLE --THEY'RE THE REAL LINK BETWEEN YOUR REALITY AND THE RIFT CREATURE.
THAT'S THE ONLY WAY YOU'LL BREAK THE LINK FOR GOOD...


YOU HAVE GOT TO BE JOKING ME, JACK!
SHE'S JUST A... CHILD!
...NOT THE FIRST TIME, IS IT, CAPTAIN?
"YOUNG GIRL. FAIRIES. LOTS OF DEAD PEOPLE. IN YOUR WAKE, JACK..."
"ONE MORE CAN'T HURT."
SMASH!
AND ONE DAY, YOU'LL GET YOURS...
DON'T YOU DARE, JACK. DON'T YOU BLOODY DARE!
I WANT MY MUMMY!
NOT AGAIN...


TOO LATE, JACK, IT'S TOO LATE... IT'S WON... IT'S HERE...
no... please... no...
MUMMY!
SAM!
MUMMMMMY!!!
SOMETIMES WE MAKE BAD DECISIONS IN LIFE...DECISIONS WE REGRET.
SOMETIMES THEY'RE BAD DECISIONS WE STAND BY.
SOMETIMES BAD DECISIONS ARE MADE FOR US, AND WE SAY WE WOULD LOVE TO CHANGE, IF WE COULD...
AND SOMETIMES WE LIE--BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT HOWEVER BAD THAT DECISION'S OUTCOME WAS, IT WAS MADE FOR THE RIGHT RESONS.
AND WE HOPE THOSE WHO KNOW US, WHO LOVE US, WILL ACCEPT THAT FACT...


NO...
CARON!
I'M WITH MY MUMMY NOW...
I FELT THE RIFT CREATURE NOT JUST WRENCHED BACK INTO THE RIFT, CUT OFF FOR GOOD, BUT I FELT IT DIE IN SHOCK, IN PAIN, AND IN ANGUISH.
AND ALSO IN UTTER INCOMPREHENSION THAT A LITTLE GIRL WOULD SACRIFICE HERSELF OUT OF LOVE FOR HER MOTHER...
AND AS THE DARKNESS TOOK ME, I WONDERED IF GWEN COOPER AND IANTO JONES WOULD COMPREHEND IT, TOO...
WHETHER HE DID OR NOT, I KINDA GOT A ANSWER FROM MY IANTO...


THE HOTEL, GONE, LIKE IT WAS NEVER THERE, REALLY.
NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENED TO BILIS, IF HE WAS EVEN EVER REALLY THERE. THE SCOTTS. THE PIERCE FAMILY. JUST NAMES ON A LONG LIST OF CASUALTIES. BUT NOT TO GWEN OR IANTO. NOT TO ME.
THEY DESERVE BETTER THAN THAT, BETTER THAN JUST BEING PART OF A LONG LIST OF--
I'VE TOLD ANDY THAT THE HOTEL WAS USING AN EXPERIMENTAL FORM OF CENTRAL HEATING THAT WENT WRONG AND TOOK THE WHOLE PLACE OUT, GUESTS INCLUDED.
DID HE BELIEVE YOU?
WOULD YOU?
A LOT OF PEOPLE DIED IN THERE, JACK. WE DIDN'T SAVE ANYONE.
WE SAVED THE ENTIRE WORLD.
NO, "WE" DIDN'T. CARON PIERCE DID THAT. A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL. I HOPE YOUR CONSCIENCE IS BIG ENOUGH TO COPE WITH THE JASMINES AND CARONS OF THIS WORLD, JACK.
THANK GOD YOU DON'T HAVE ANY KIDS.
CHRIST KNOWS WHAT YOU'D DO TO THEM...
THERE Y'GO, BUDDY.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE THE ONLY OTHER SURVIVOR... LUCKY, EH?
OH, YES. AND I'M ALWAYS GOING TO BE GRATEFUL TO CAPTAIN JACK HARKNESS AND HIS TEAM.
ONE DAY, I DO HOPE I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO THANK THEM.
PERSONALLY.
THE END


"HE'S FALLING."
"HE'S FALLING FAST."
"AND AS THE SHEER HORROR OF HIS PREDICAMENT CUTS SHREDS FROM MY HEART, SLICING LIKE A COLD KNIFE THROUGH MY GUTS..."
"...ALL I CAN THINK OF IS ONE THING..."
"WILL IT *HURT?*"

HELL HOUSE

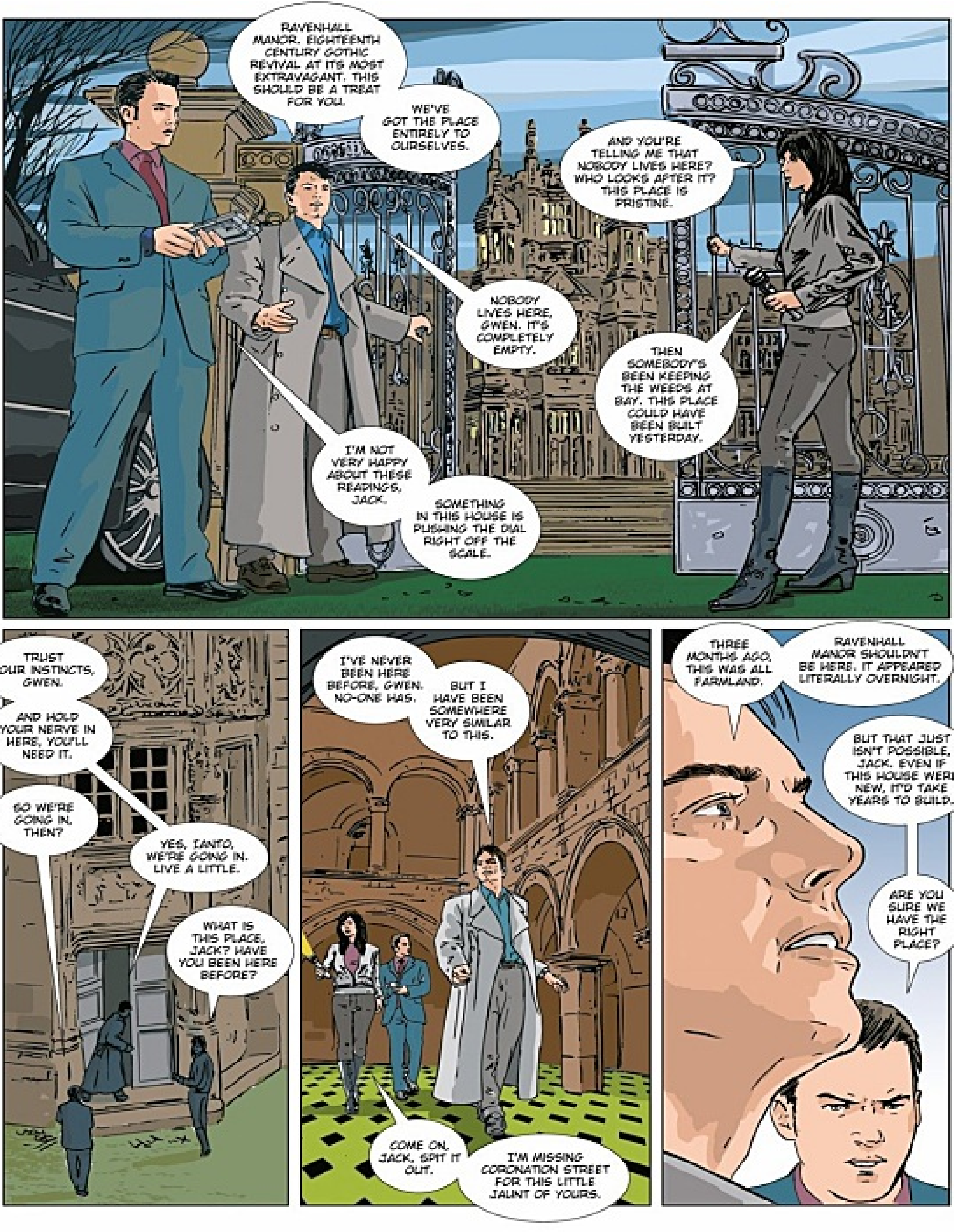
SCRIPT, COLOURS AND LETTERING

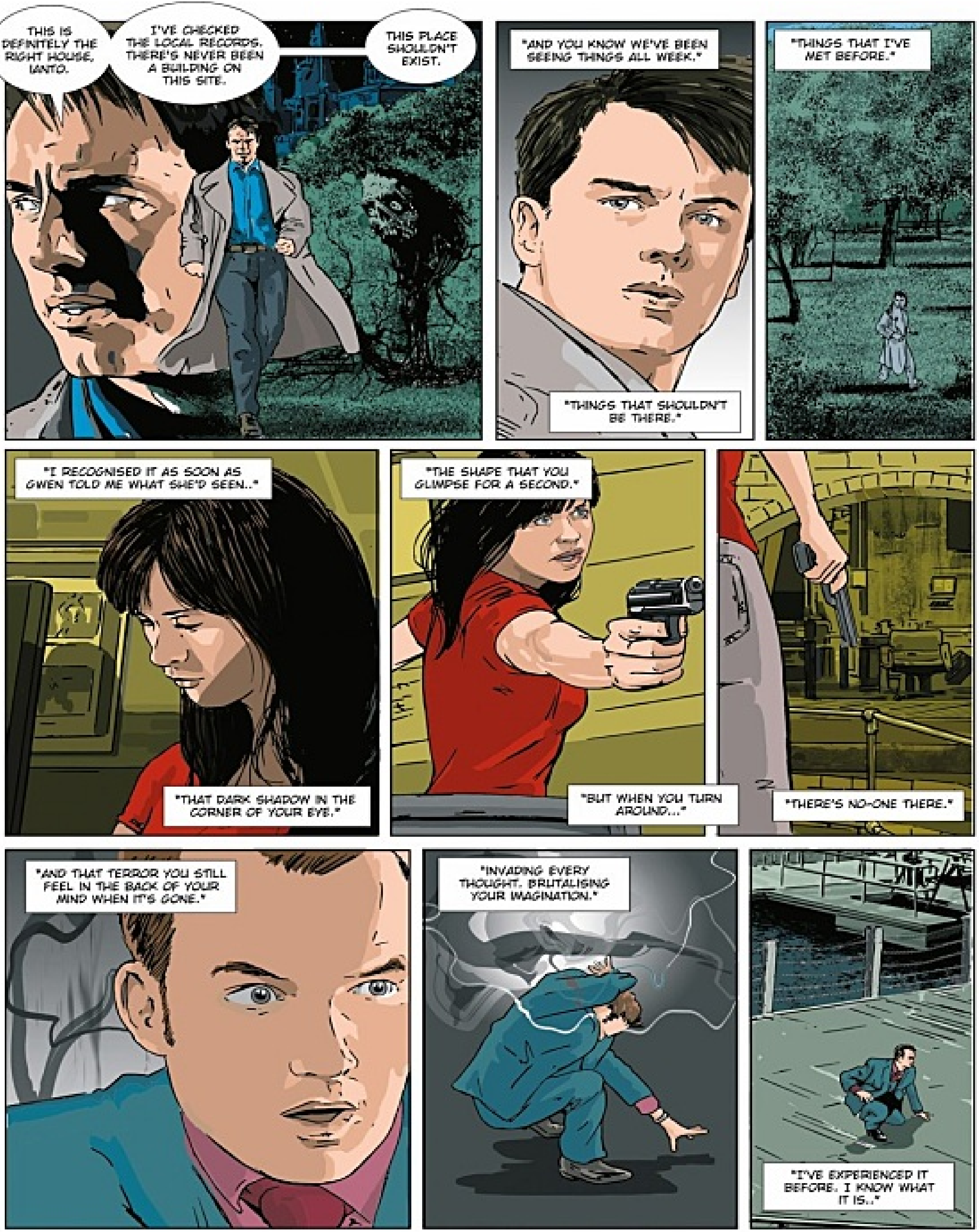
ROGER GIBSON

CO-PLOTTERS

PENCILS, INKS AND TONES

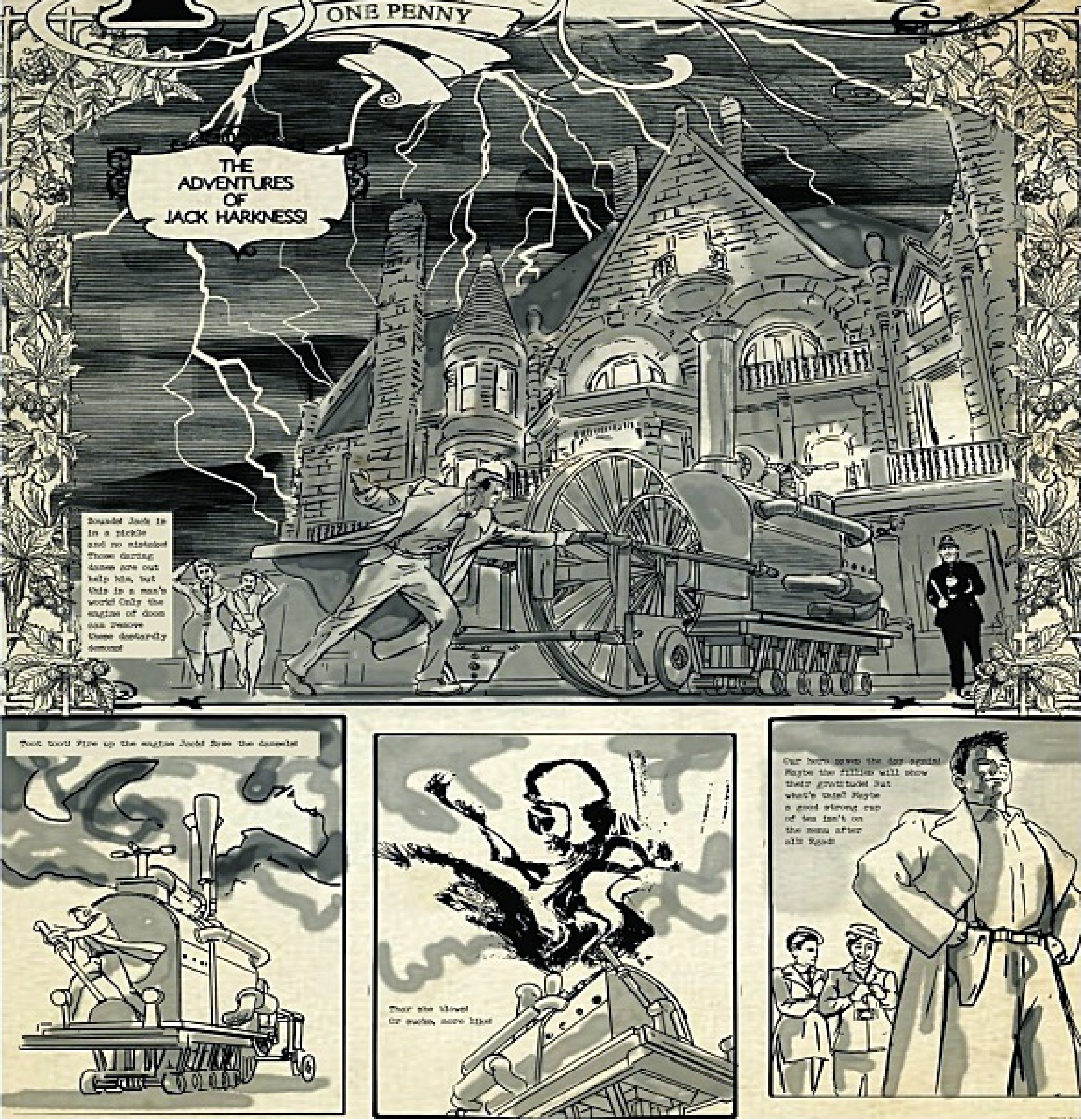
VINCE DANKS

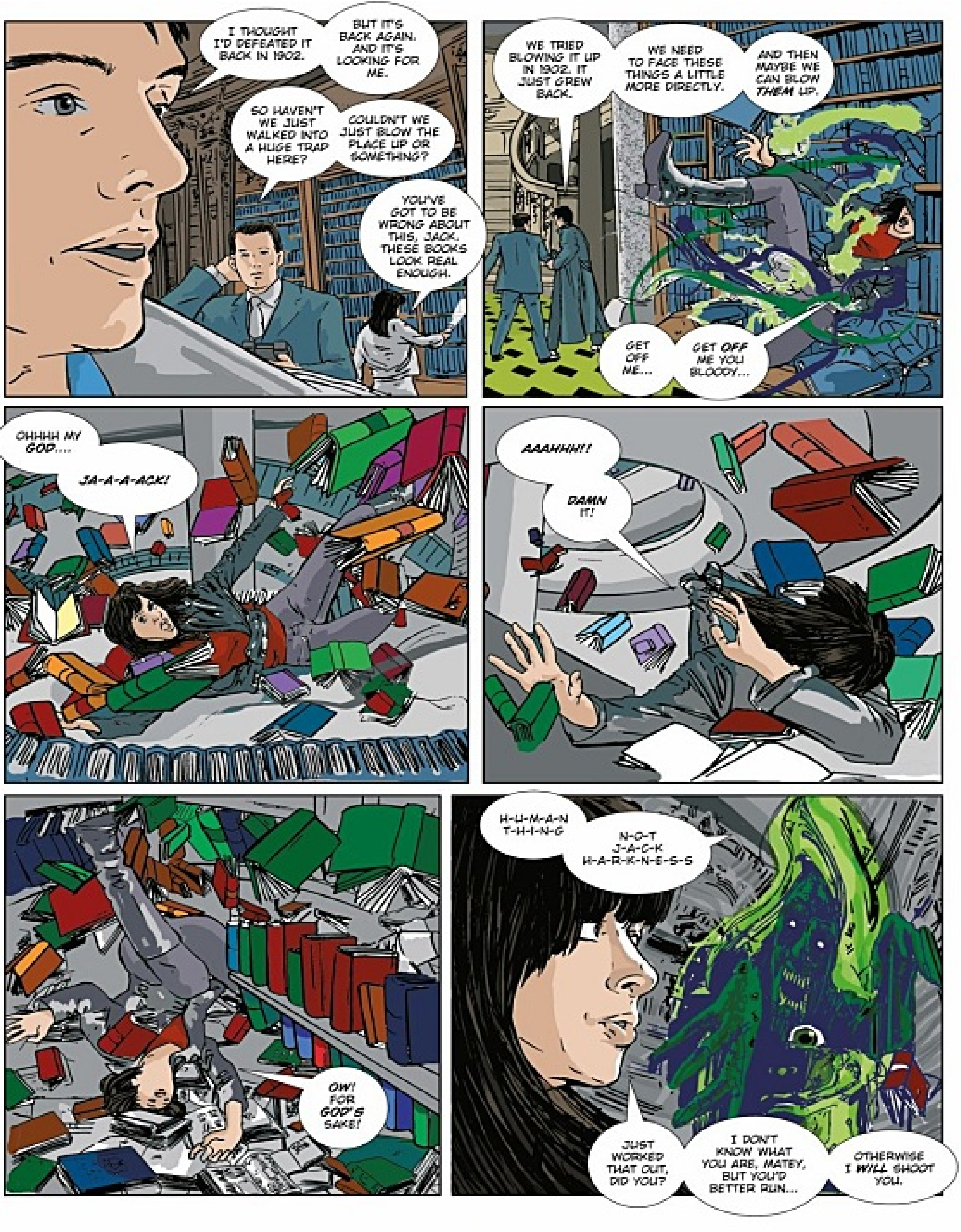

RAVENHALL MANOR. EIGHTEENTH CENTURY GOTHIC REVIVAL AT ITS MOST EXTRAVAGANT. THIS SHOULD BE A TREAT FOR YOU.
WE'VE GOT THE PLACE ENTIRELY TO OURSELVES.
AND YOU'RE TELLING ME THAT NOBODY LIVES HERE? WHO LOOKS AFTER IT? THIS PLACE IS PRISTINE.
NOBODY LIVES HERE, GWEN. IT'S COMPLETELY EMPTY.
THEN SOMEBODY'S BEEN KEEPING THE WEEDS AT BAY. THIS PLACE COULD HAVE BEEN BUILT YESTERDAY.
I'M NOT VERY HAPPY ABOUT THESE READINGS, JACK.
SOMETHING IN THIS HOUSE IS PUSHING THE DIAL RIGHT OFF THE SCALE.
TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS, GWEN.
AND HOLD YOUR NERVE IN HERE, YOU'LL NEED IT.
SO WE'RE GOING IN, THEN?
YES, IANTO, WE'RE GOING IN. LIVE A LITTLE.
WHAT IS THIS PLACE, JACK? HAVE YOU BEEN HERE BEFORE?
I'VE NEVER BEEN HERE BEFORE, GWEN. NO-ONE HAS.
BUT I HAVE BEEN SOMEWHERE VERY SIMILAR TO THIS.
COME ON, JACK, SPIT IT OUT.
I'M MISSING CORONATION STREET FOR THIS LITTLE JAUNT OF YOURS.
THREE MONTHS AGO, THIS WAS ALL FARMLAND.
RAVENHALL MANOR SHOULDN'T BE HERE. IT APPEARED LITERALLY OVERNIGHT.
BUT THAT JUST ISN'T POSSIBLE, JACK. EVEN IF THIS HOUSE WERE NEW, IT'D TAKE YEARS TO BUILD.
ARE YOU SURE WE HAVE THE RIGHT PLACE?

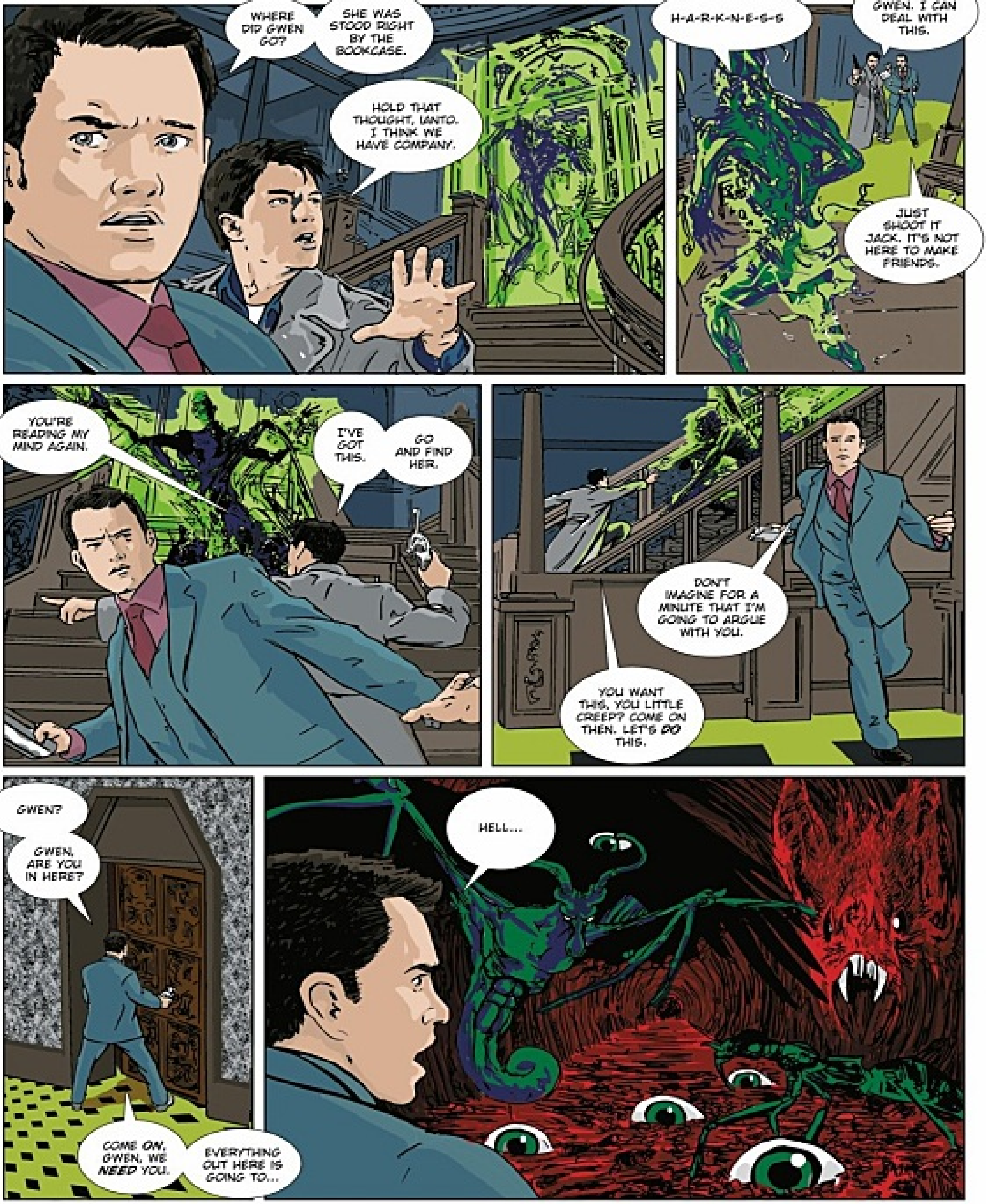

THIS IS DEFINITELY THE RIGHT HOUSE, IANTO.
I'VE CHECKED THE LOCAL RECORDS. THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BUILDING ON THIS SITE.
THIS PLACE SHOULDN'T EXIST.
"AND YOU KNOW WE'VE BEEN SEEING THINGS ALL WEEK."
"THINGS THAT SHOULDN'T BE THERE."
"THINGS THAT I'VE MET BEFORE."
"I RECOGNISED IT AS SOON AS GWEN TOLD ME WHAT SHE'D SEEN..."
"THAT DARK SHADOW IN THE CORNER OF YOUR EYE."
"THE SHAPE THAT YOU GLIMPSE FOR A SECOND."
"BUT WHEN YOU TURN AROUND..."
"THERE'S NO-ONE THERE."
"AND THAT TERROR YOU STILL FEEL IN THE BACK OF YOUR MIND WHEN IT'S GONE."
"INVADING EVERY THOUGHT. BRUTALISING YOUR IMAGINATION."
"I'VE EXPERIENCED IT BEFORE. I KNOW WHAT IT IS..."

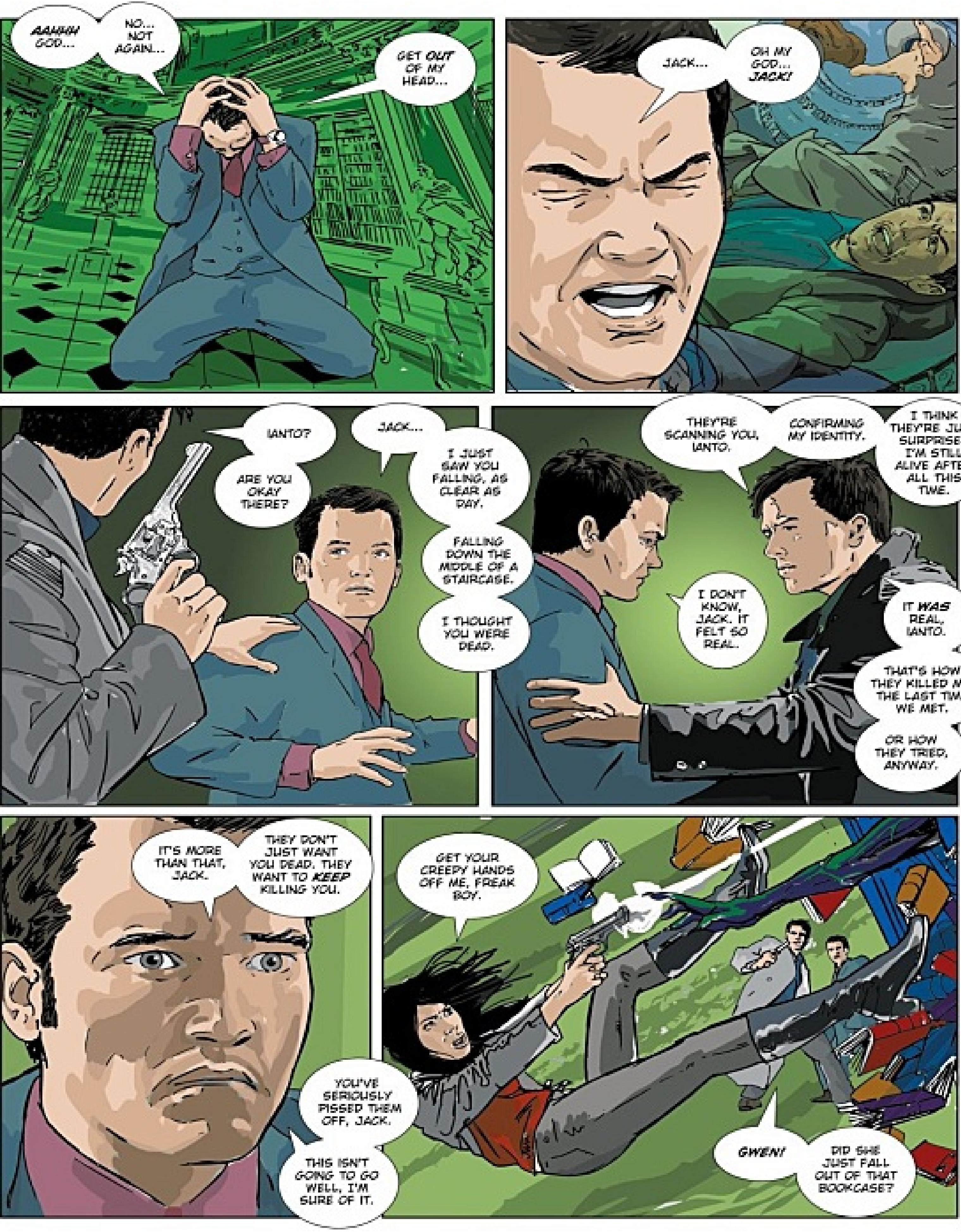
TORCHWOOD

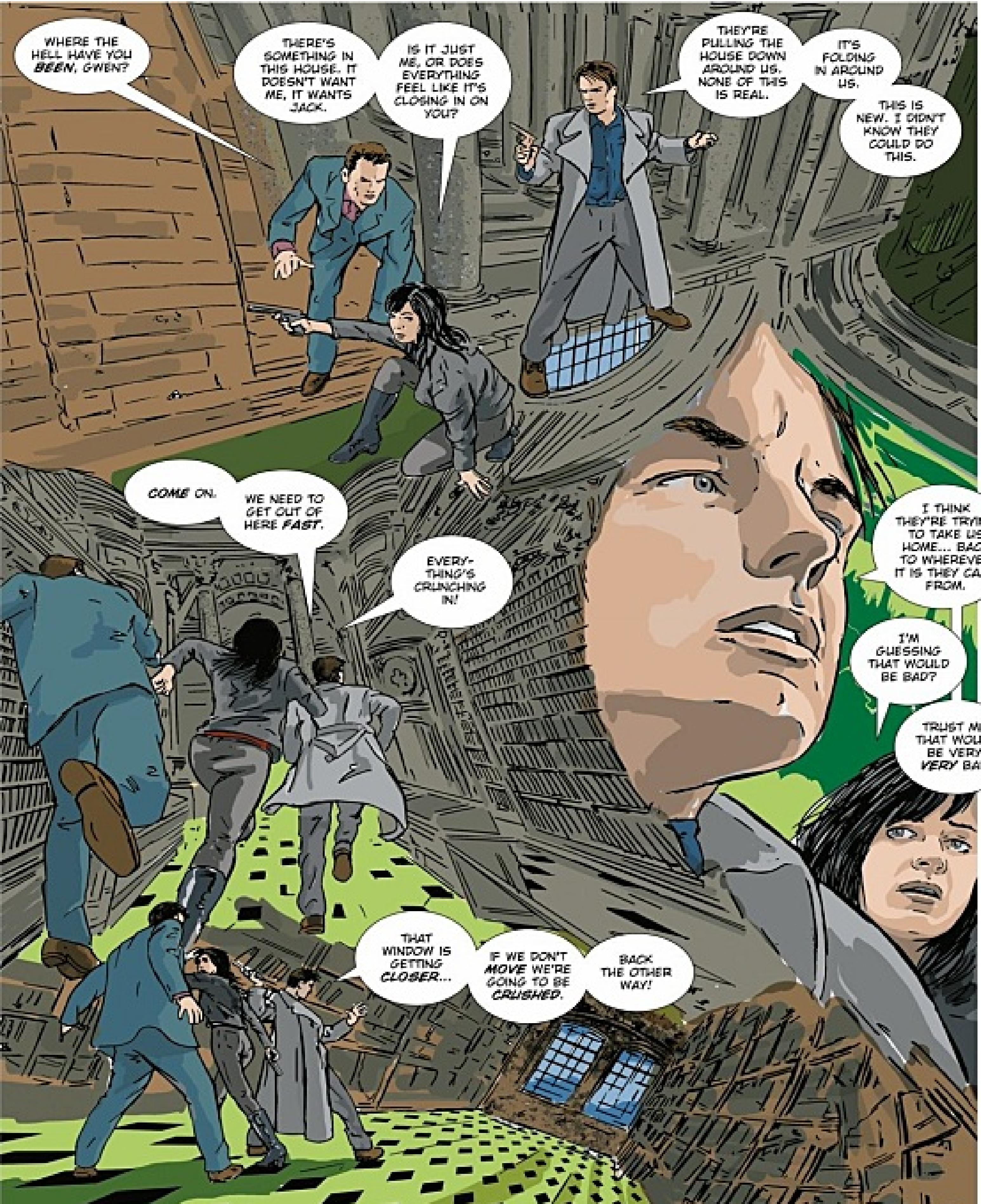
ONE PENNY

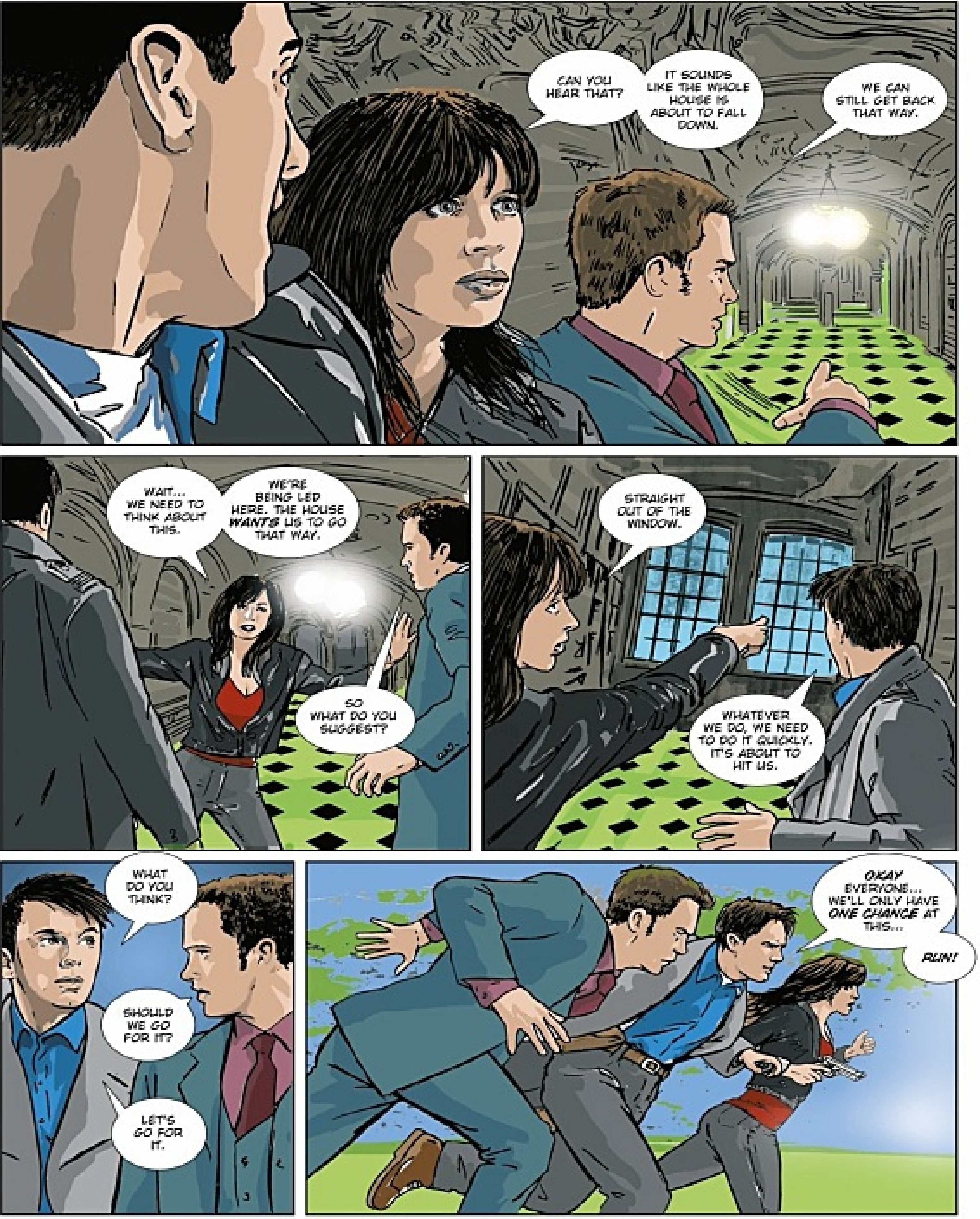

THE ADVENTURES OF JACK HARKNESS!
Zounds! Jack is in a pickle and no mistake! Those daring dames are out help him, but this is a man's world! Only the engine of doom can remove these dastardly demons!
Toot toot! Fire up the engine Jack! Save the damsels!
Thar she blows! Or sucks, more like!
Our hero saves the day again! Maybe the fillies will show their gratitude! But what's this? Maybe a good strong cup of tea isn't on the menu after all! Egad!

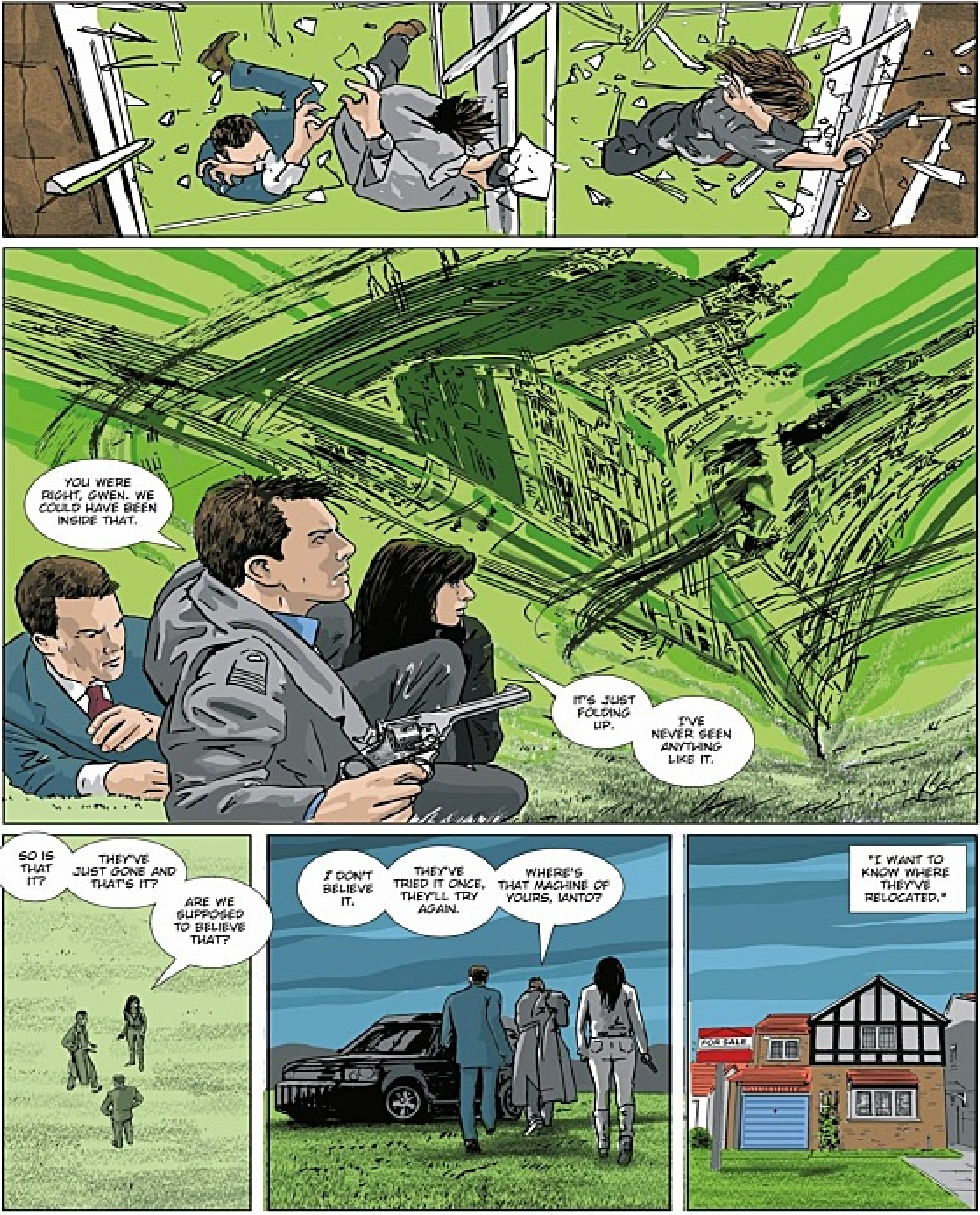

I THOUGHT I'D DEFEATED IT BACK IN 1902.
BUT IT'S BACK AGAIN. AND IT'S LOOKING FOR ME.
SO HAVEN'T WE JUST WALKED INTO A HUGE TRAP HERE?
COULDN'T WE JUST BLOW THE PLACE UP OR SOMETHING?
YOU'VE GOT TO BE WRONG ABOUT THIS, JACK. THESE BOOKS LOOK REAL ENOUGH.
WE TRIED BLOWING IT UP IN 1902. IT JUST GREW BACK.
WE NEED TO FACE THESE THINGS A LITTLE MORE DIRECTLY.
AND THEN MAYBE WE CAN BLOW *THEM* UP.
GET OFF ME...
GET *OFF* ME YOU BLOODY...
OHHHH MY GOD....
JA-A-A-ACK!
AAAHHH!!
DAMN IT!
OW! FOR *GOD'S* SAKE!
H-U-M-A-N T-H-I-N-G
N-O-T J-A-C-K H-A-R-K-N-E-S-S
JUST WORKED THAT OUT, DID YOU?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE, MATEY, BUT YOU'D BETTER RUN...
OTHERWISE I *WILL* SHOOT YOU.

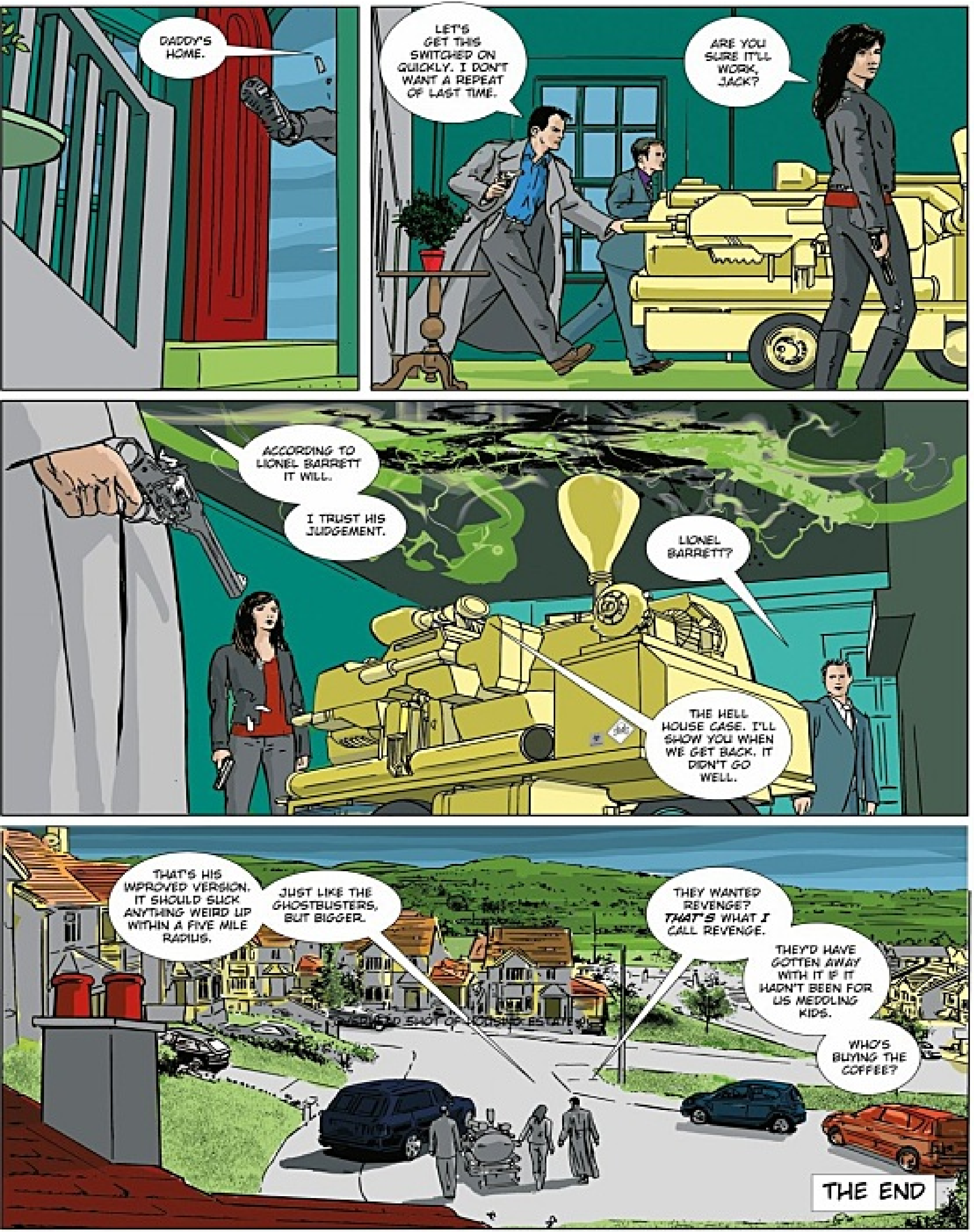

WHERE DID GWEN GO?
SHE WAS STOOD RIGHT BY THE BOOKCASE.
HOLD THAT THOUGHT, IANTO. I THINK WE HAVE COMPANY.
H-A-R-K-N-E-S-S
GO FIND GWEN. I CAN DEAL WITH THIS.
JUST SHOOT IT JACK. IT'S NOT HERE TO MAKE FRIENDS.
YOU'RE READING MY MIND AGAIN.
I'VE GOT THIS.
GO AND FIND HER.
DON'T IMAGINE FOR A MINUTE THAT I'M GOING TO ARGUE WITH YOU.
YOU WANT THIS, YOU LITTLE CREEP? COME ON THEN. LET'S DO THIS.
GWEN?
GWEN, ARE YOU IN HERE?
COME ON, GWEN, WE NEED YOU.
EVERYTHING OUT HERE IS GOING TO...
HELL...

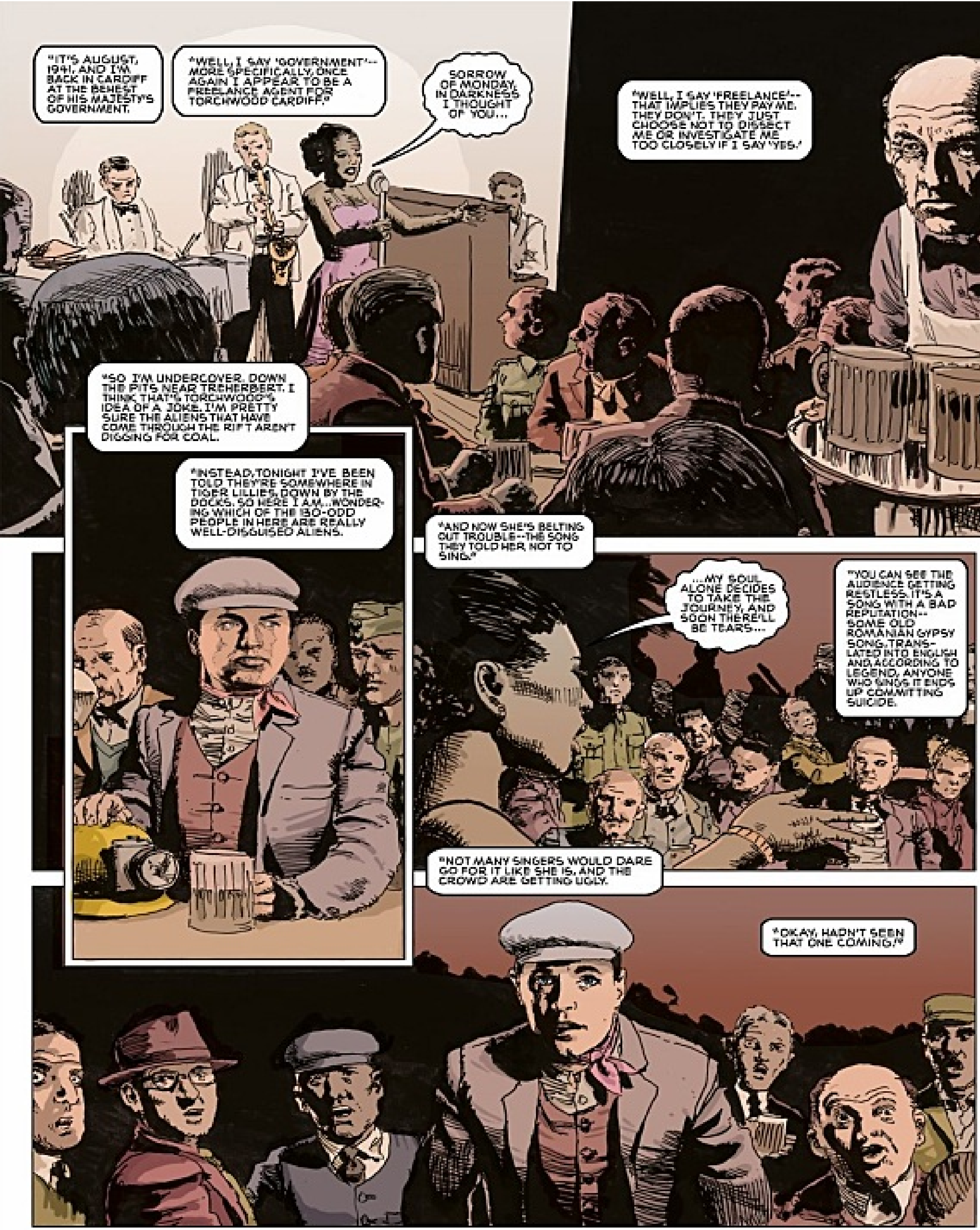

AAHHH GOD...
NO... NOT AGAIN...
GET OUT OF MY HEAD...
JACK...
OH MY GOD... JACK!
IANTO?
ARE YOU OKAY THERE?
JACK...
I JUST SAW YOU FALLING, AS CLEAR AS DAY.
FALLING DOWN THE MIDDLE OF A STAIRCASE.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.
THEY'RE SCANNING YOU, IANTO.
CONFIRMING MY IDENTITY.
I THINK THEY'RE JUST SURPRISED I'M STILL ALIVE AFTER ALL THIS TIME.
I DON'T KNOW, JACK. IT FELT SO REAL.
IT WAS REAL, IANTO.
THAT'S HOW THEY KILLED ME, THE LAST TIME WE MET.
OR HOW THEY TRIED, ANYWAY.
IT'S MORE THAN THAT, JACK.
THEY DON'T JUST WANT YOU DEAD. THEY WANT TO KEEP KILLING YOU.
YOU'VE SERIOUSLY PISSED THEM OFF, JACK.
THIS ISN'T GOING TO GO WELL, I'M SURE OF IT.
GET YOUR CREEPY HANDS OFF ME, FREAK BOY.
GWEN!
DID SHE JUST FALL OUT OF THAT BOOKCASE?

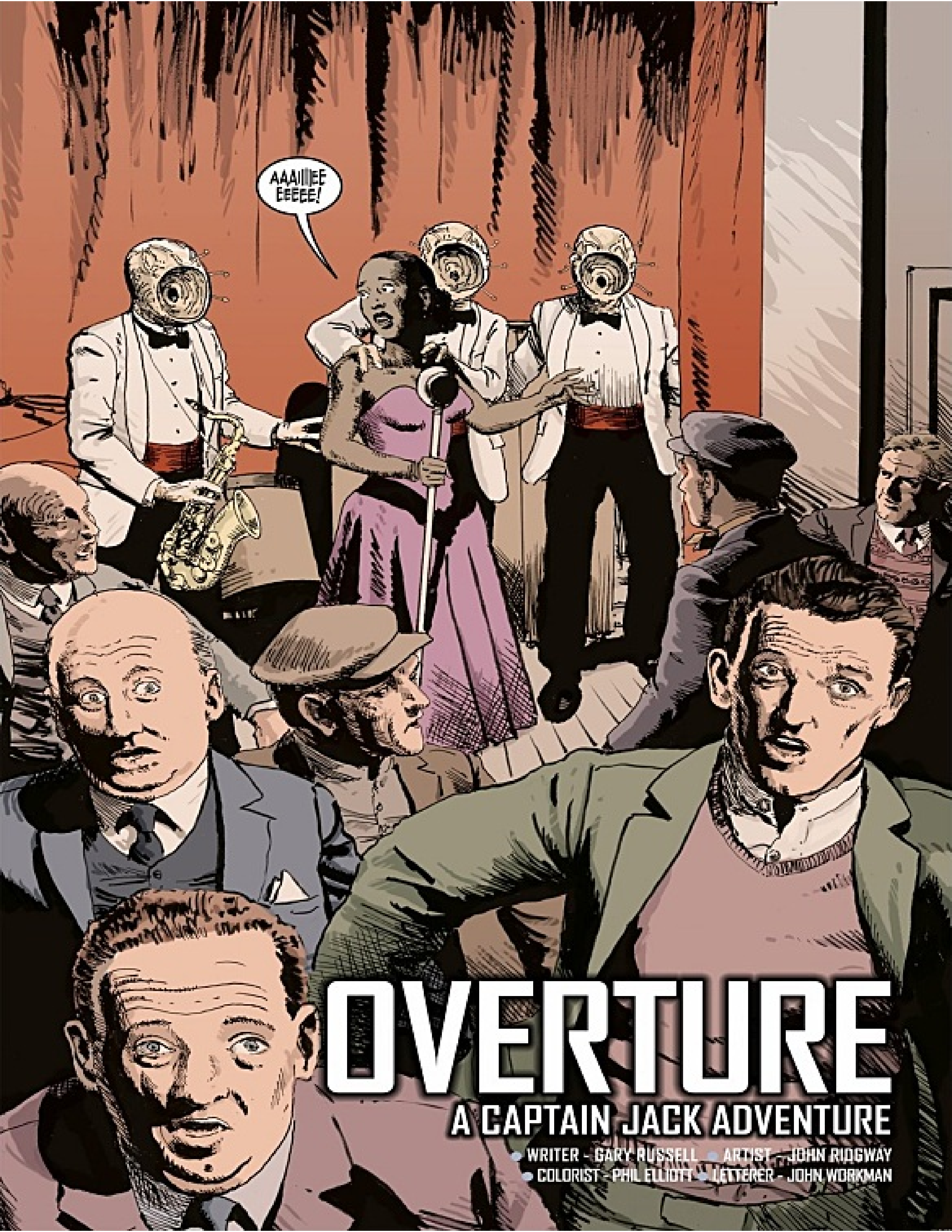

WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU ***BEEN***, GWEN?
THERE'S SOMETHING IN THIS HOUSE. IT DOESN'T WANT ME, IT WANTS *JACK*.
IS IT JUST *ME*, OR DOES EVERYTHING FEEL LIKE IT'S *CLOSING IN* ON YOU?
THEY'RE PULLING THE HOUSE DOWN *AROUND* US. NONE OF THIS IS REAL.
IT'S *FOLDING* IN AROUND US.
THIS IS NEW. I DIDN'T KNOW THEY *COULD* DO THIS.
COME ON.
WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE ***FAST***.
EVERYTHING'S *CRUNCHING* IN!
I THINK THEY'RE TRYING TO TAKE US HOME... BACK TO WHEREVER IT IS THEY CAME FROM.
I'M *GUESSING* THAT WOULD BE BAD?
TRUST ME. THAT WOULD BE VERY, ***VERY*** BAD.
THAT WINDOW IS *GETTING* ***CLOSER***...
IF WE DON'T ***MOVE*** WE'RE *GOING* TO BE ***CRUSHED***.
BACK THE *OTHER* WAY!


CAN YOU HEAR THAT?
IT SOUNDS LIKE THE WHOLE HOUSE IS ABOUT TO FALL DOWN.
WE CAN STILL GET BACK THAT WAY.
WAIT... WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT THIS.
WE'RE BEING LED HERE. THE HOUSE *WANTS* US TO GO THAT WAY.
SO WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?
STRAIGHT OUT OF THE WINDOW.
WHATEVER WE DO, WE NEED TO DO IT *QUICKLY*. IT'S ABOUT TO HIT US.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
SHOULD WE GO FOR IT?
LET'S GO FOR IT.
OKAY EVERYONE... WE'LL ONLY HAVE *ONE CHANCE* AT THIS...
RUN!


YOU WERE RIGHT, GWEN. WE COULD HAVE BEEN INSIDE THAT.
IT'S JUST FOLDING UP.
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.
SO IS THAT IT?
THEY'VE JUST GONE AND THAT'S IT?
ARE WE SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE THAT?
I DON'T BELIEVE IT.
THEY'VE TRIED IT ONCE, THEY'LL TRY AGAIN.
WHERE'S THAT MACHINE OF YOURS, IANTO?
"I WANT TO KNOW WHERE THEY'VE RELOCATED."
FOR SALE


DADDY'S HOME.
LET'S GET THIS SWITCHED ON QUICKLY. I DON'T WANT A REPEAT OF LAST TIME.
ARE YOU SURE IT'LL WORK, JACK?
ACCORDING TO LIONEL BARRETT IT WILL.
I TRUST HIS JUDGEMENT.
LIONEL BARRETT?
THE HELL HOUSE CASE. I'LL SHOW YOU WHEN WE GET BACK. IT DIDN'T GO WELL.
THAT'S HIS IMPROVED VERSION. IT SHOULD SUCK ANYTHING WEIRD UP WITHIN A FIVE MILE RADIUS.
JUST LIKE THE GHOSTBUSTERS, BUT BIGGER.
THEY WANTED REVENGE? ***THAT'S*** WHAT ***I*** CALL REVENGE.
THEY'D HAVE GOTTEN AWAY WITH IT IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR US MEDDLING KIDS.
WHO'S BUYING THE COFFEE?
THE END

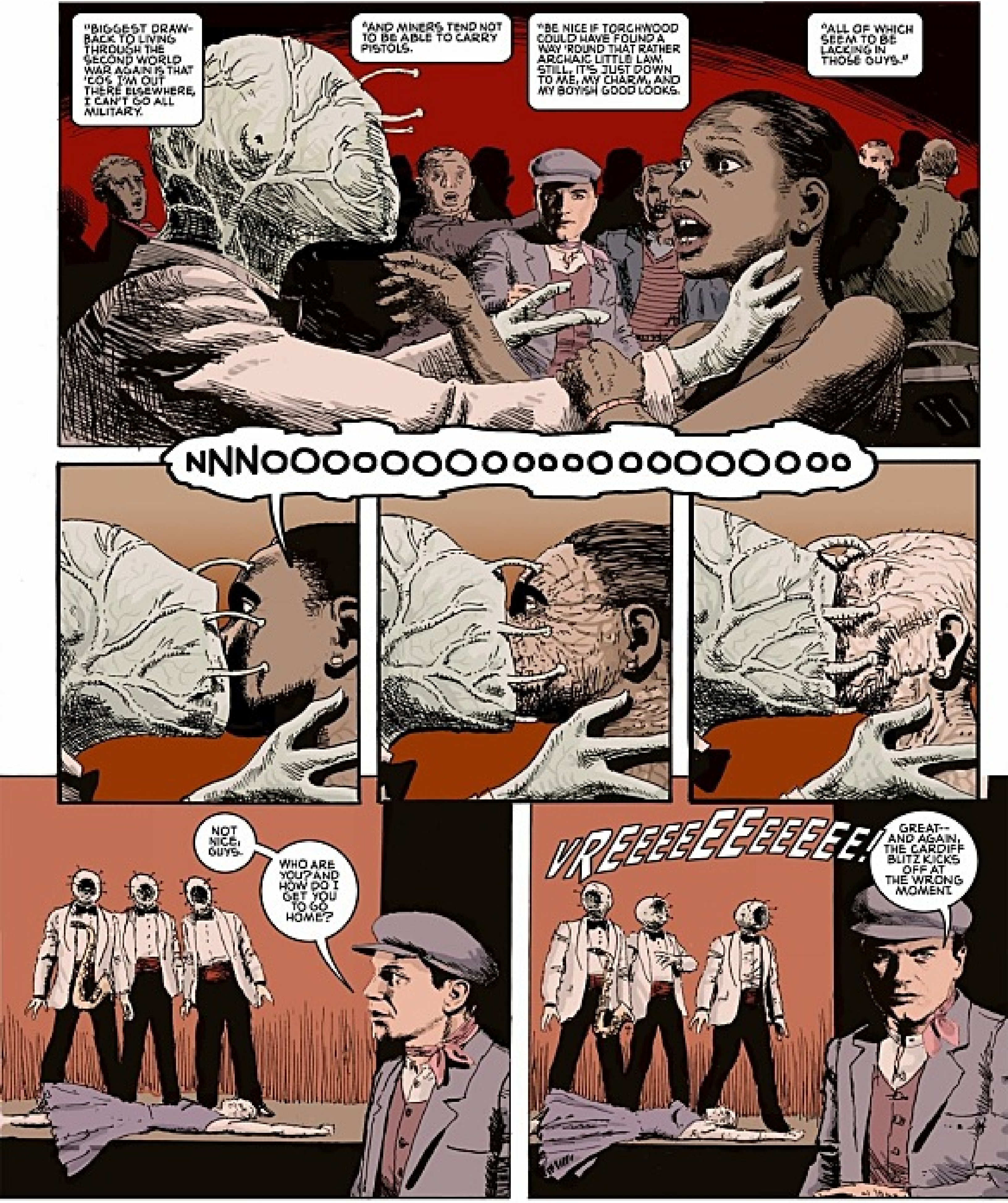

"IT'S AUGUST, 1941, AND I'M BACK IN CARDIFF AT THE BEHEST OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT.
"WELL, I SAY 'GOVERNMENT'-- MORE SPECIFICALLY, ONCE AGAIN I APPEAR TO BE A FREELANCE AGENT FOR TORCHWOOD CARDIFF."
SORROW OF MONDAY, IN DARKNESS I THOUGHT OF YOU...
"WELL, I SAY 'FREELANCE'-- THAT IMPLIES THEY PAY ME. THEY DON'T. THEY JUST CHOOSE NOT TO DISSECT ME OR INVESTIGATE ME TOO CLOSELY IF I SAY 'YES.'
"SO I'M UNDERCOVER. DOWN THE PITS NEAR TREHERBERT. I THINK THAT'S TORCHWOOD'S IDEA OF A JOKE. I'M PRETTY SURE THE ALIENS THAT HAVE COME THROUGH THE RIFT AREN'T DIGGING FOR COAL.
"INSTEAD, TONIGHT I'VE BEEN TOLD THEY'RE SOMEWHERE IN TIGER LILLIES, DOWN BY THE DOCKS. SO HERE I AM...WONDERING WHICH OF THE 180-ODD PEOPLE IN HERE ARE REALLY WELL-DISGUISED ALIENS.
"AND NOW SHE'S BELTING OUT TROUBLE--THE SONG THEY TOLD HER NOT TO SING."
...MY SOUL ALONE DECIDES TO TAKE THE JOURNEY, AND SOON THERE'LL BE TEARS...
"YOU CAN SEE THE AUDIENCE GETTING RESTLESS. IT'S A SONG WITH A BAD REPUTATION-- SOME OLD ROMANIAN GYPSY SONG, TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH AND, ACCORDING TO LEGEND, ANYONE WHO SINGS IT ENDS UP COMMITTING SUICIDE.
"NOT MANY SINGERS WOULD DARE GO FOR IT LIKE SHE IS, AND THE CROWD ARE GETTING UGLY.
"OKAY, HADN'T SEEN THAT ONE COMING."

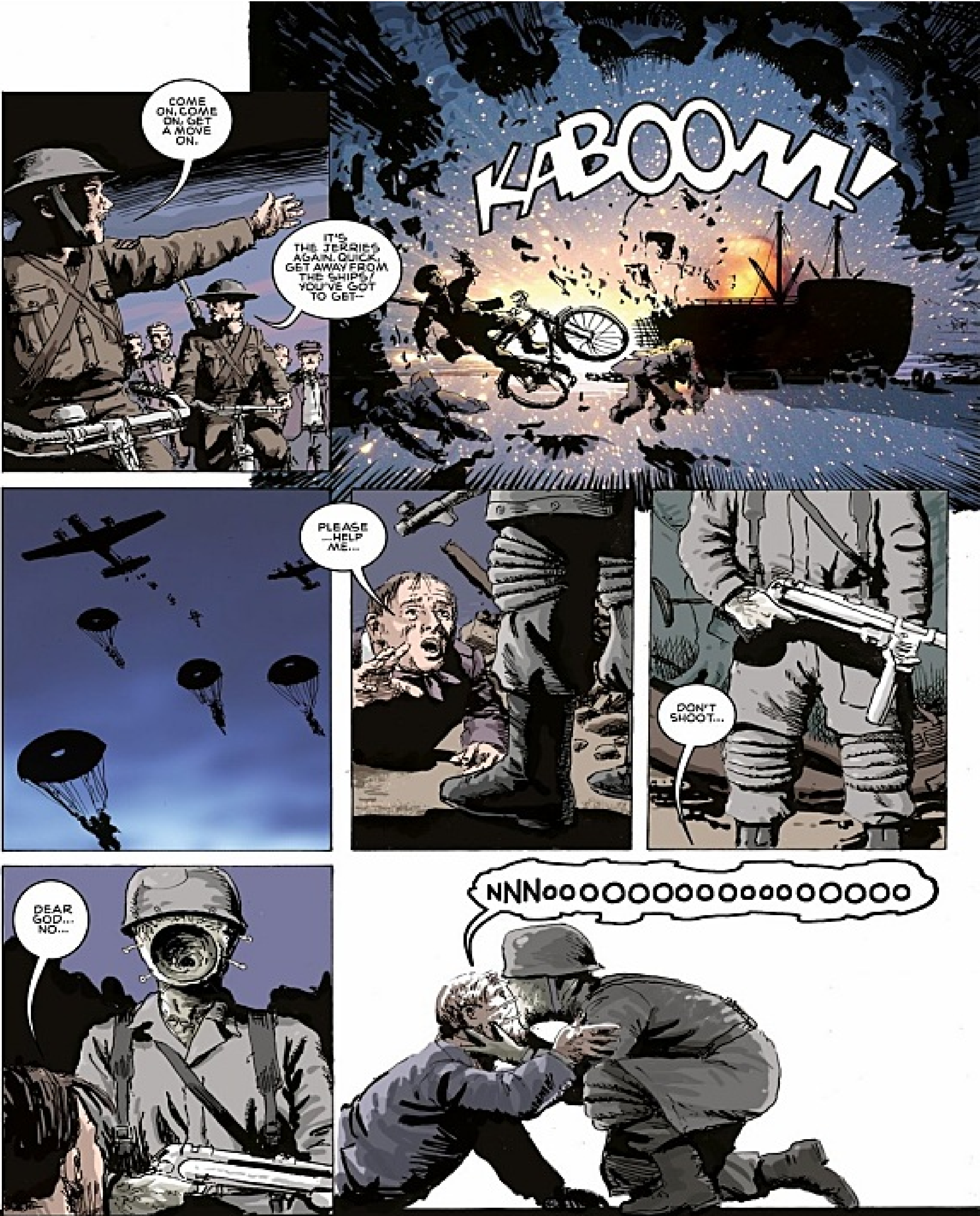

AAAIIIEE EEEEE!

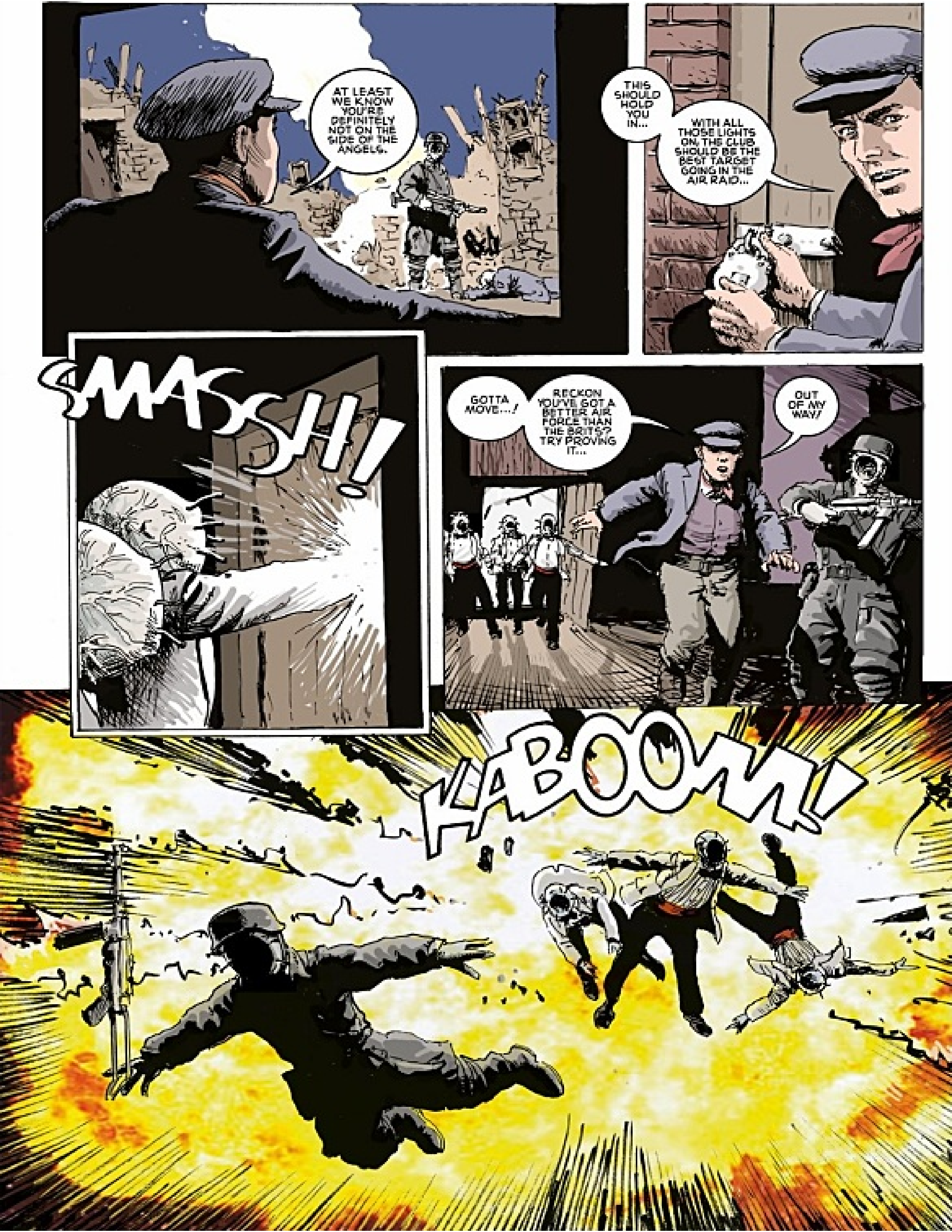
OVERTURE

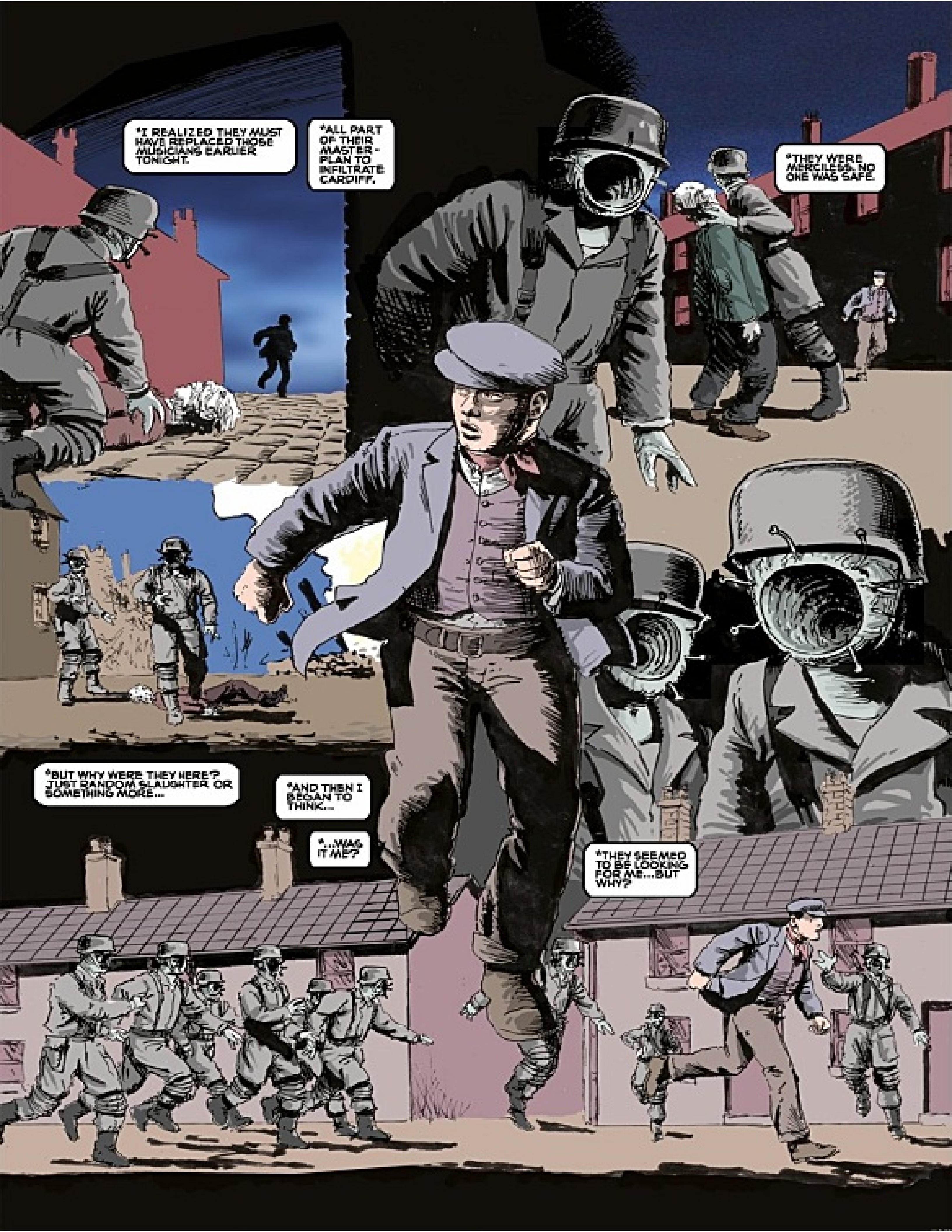
A CAPTAIN JACK ADVENTURE

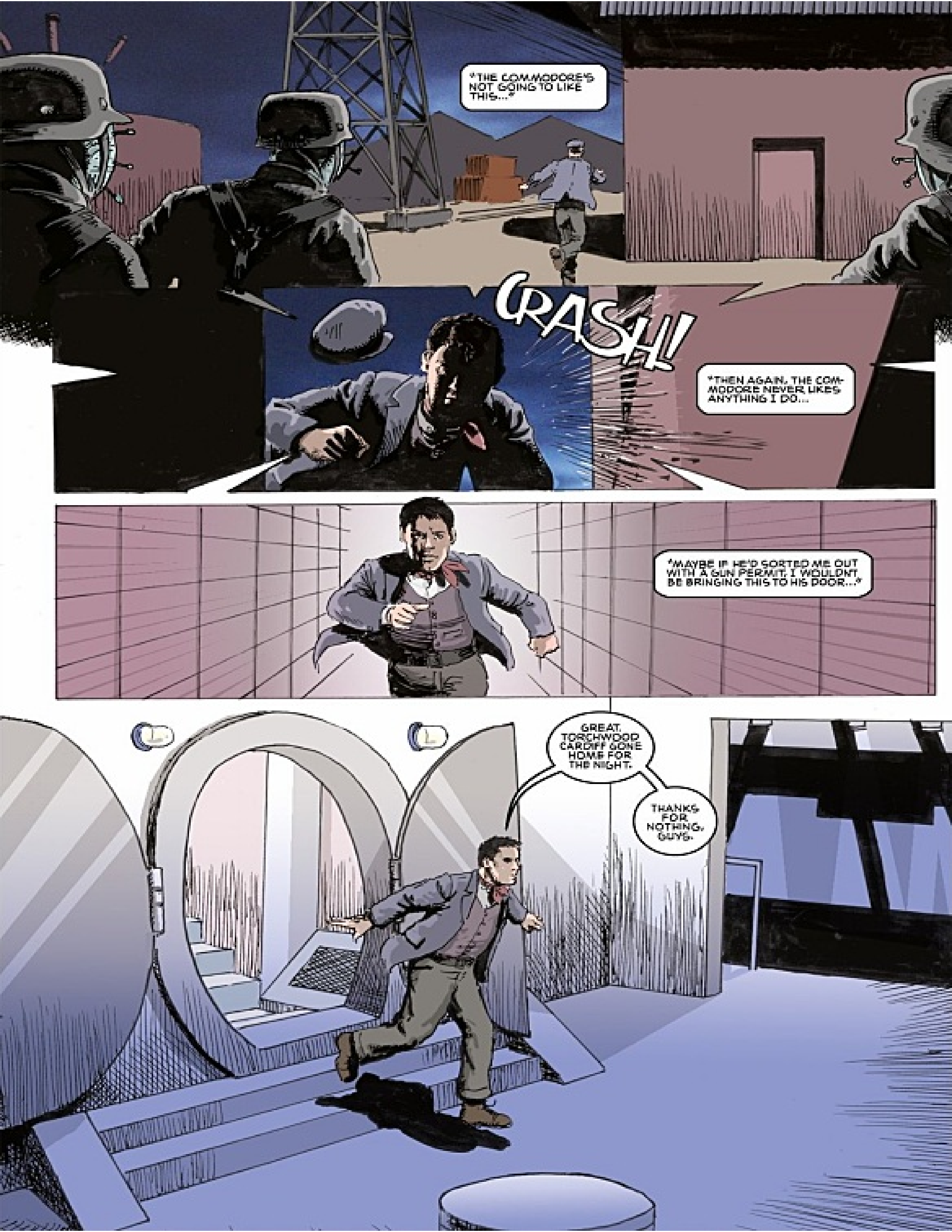
● WRITER - GARY RUSSELL ● ARTIST - JOHN RIDGWAY
● COLORIST - PHIL ELLIOTT ● LETTERER - JOHN WORKMAN

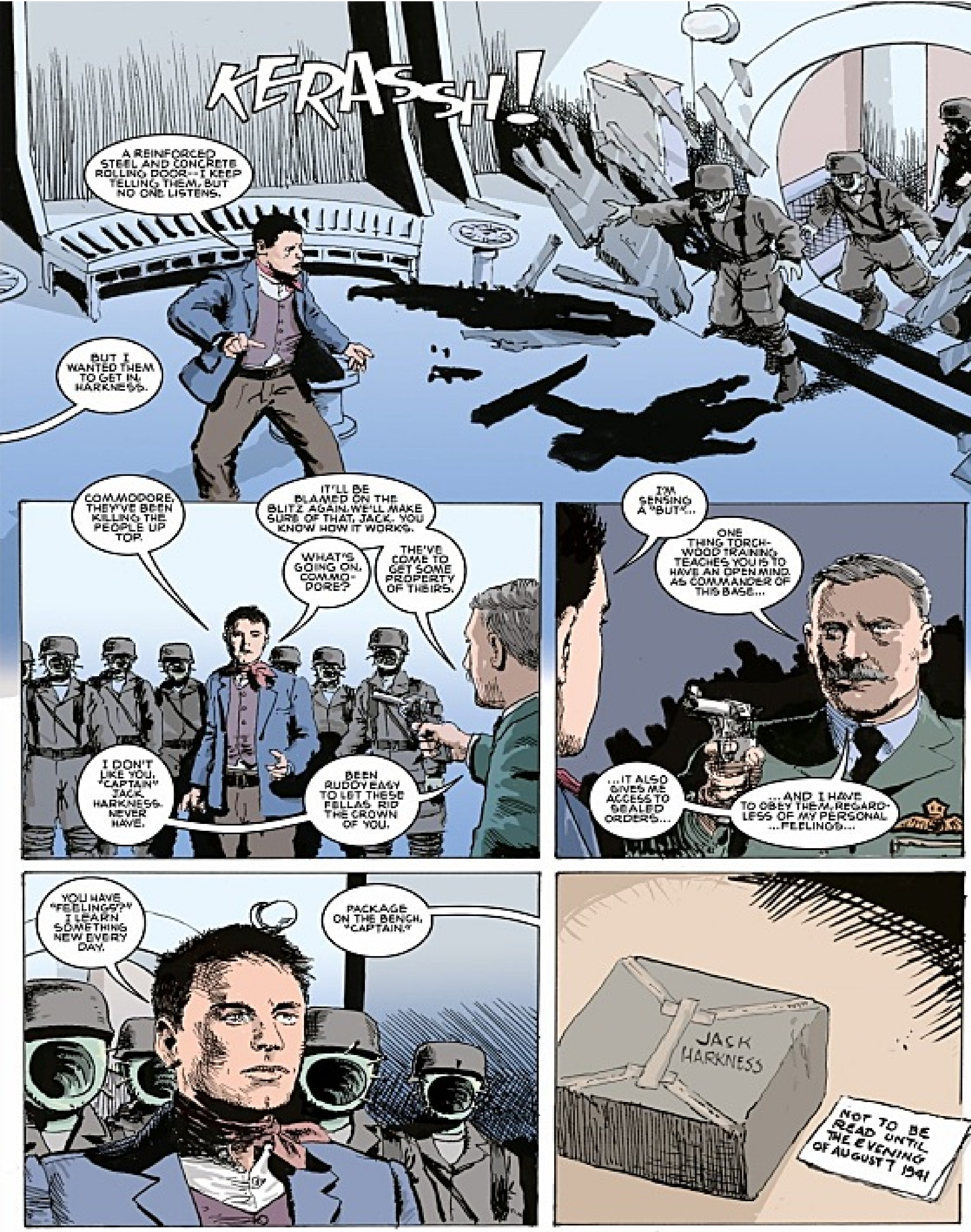

"BIGGEST DRAWBACK TO LIVING THROUGH THE SECOND WORLD WAR AGAIN IS THAT 'COS I'M OUT THERE ELSEWHERE, I CAN'T GO ALL MILITARY.
"AND MINERS TEND NOT TO BE ABLE TO CARRY PISTOLS.
"BE NICE IF TORCHWOOD COULD HAVE FOUND A WAY 'ROUND THAT RATHER ARCHAIC LITTLE LAW. STILL, IT'S JUST DOWN TO ME, MY CHARM, AND MY BOYISH GOOD LOOKS.
"ALL OF WHICH SEEM TO BE LACKING IN THOSE GUYS."
NNNOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO
NOT NICE, GUYS.
WHO ARE YOU? AND HOW DO I GET YOU TO GO HOME?
VREEEEEEEEEEE!
GREAT-- AND AGAIN, THE CARDIFF BLITZ KICKS OFF AT THE WRONG MOMENT.

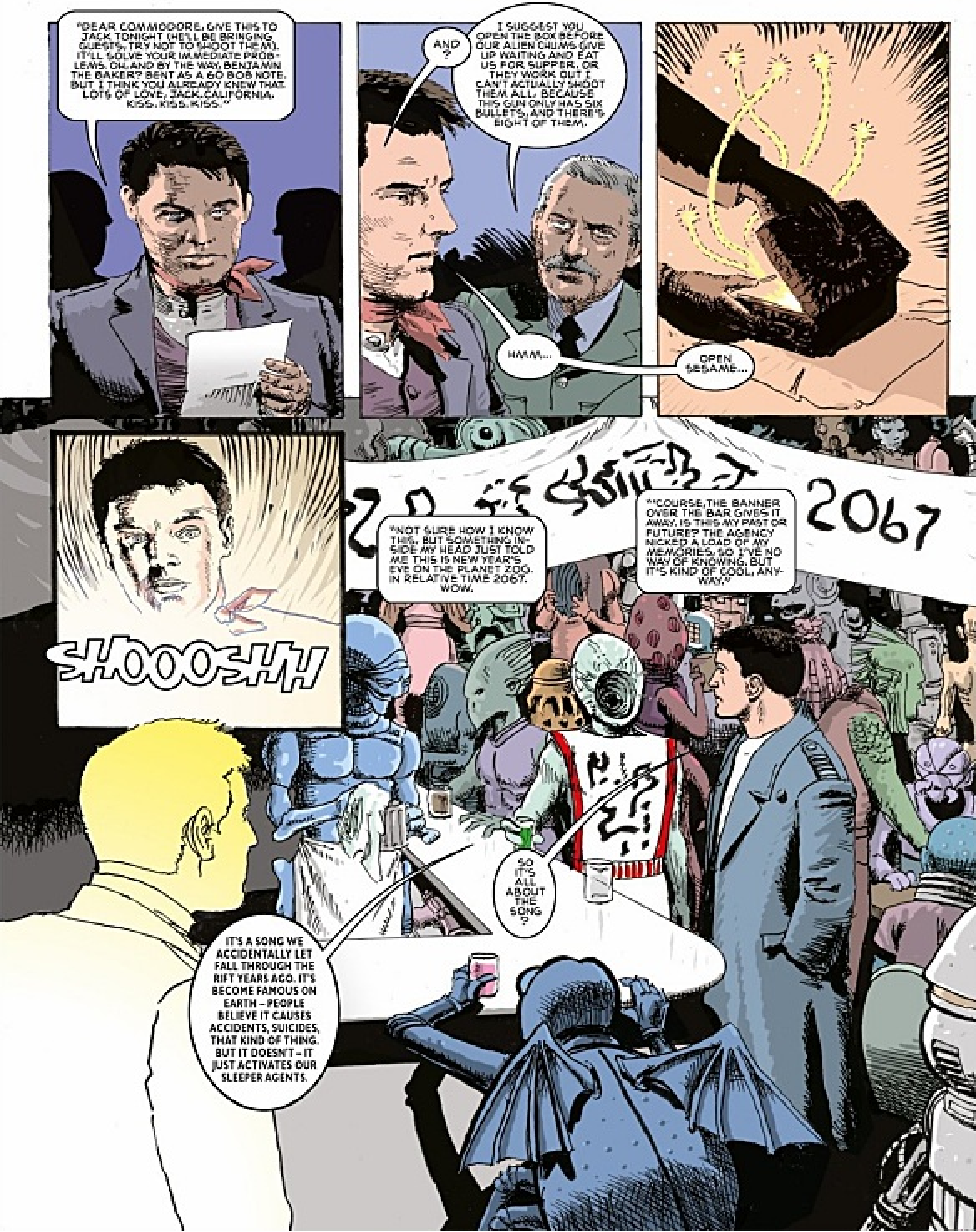

COME ON, COME ON, GET A MOVE ON.
IT'S THE JERRIES AGAIN. QUICK, GET AWAY FROM THE SHIPS! YOU'VE GOT TO GET--
KABOOM!
PLEASE --HELP ME...
DON'T SHOOT...
DEAR GOD... NO...
NNNooOOOOOOOoooOOOOo

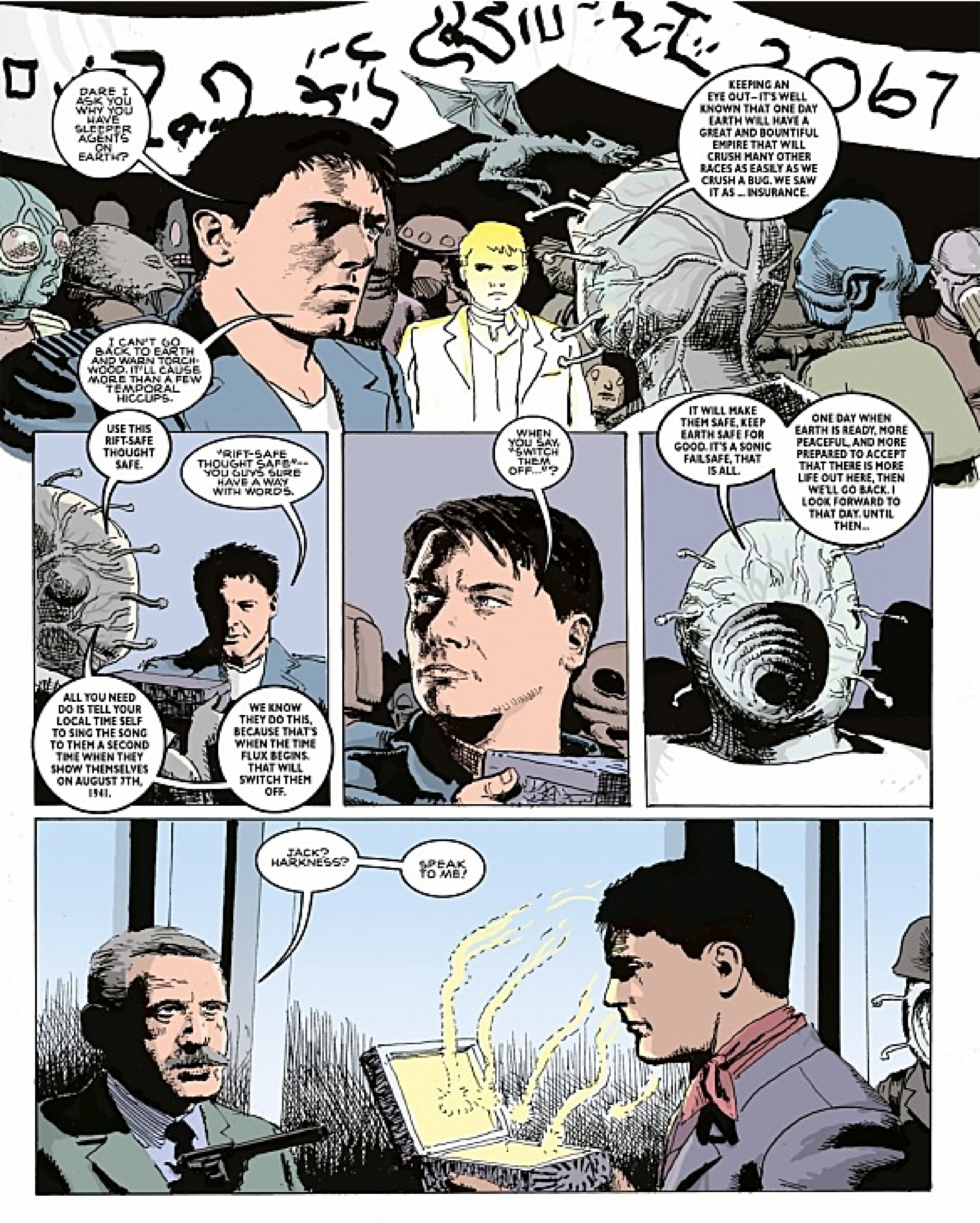

AT LEAST WE KNOW YOU'RE DEFINITELY NOT ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS.
THIS SHOULD HOLD YOU IN...
WITH ALL THOSE LIGHTS ON, THE CLUB SHOULD BE THE BEST TARGET GOING IN THE AIR RAID...
SMASSH!
GOTTA MOVE...!
RECKON YOU'VE GOT A BETTER AIR FORCE THAN THE BRITS? TRY PROVING IT...
OUT OF MY WAY!
KABOOM!

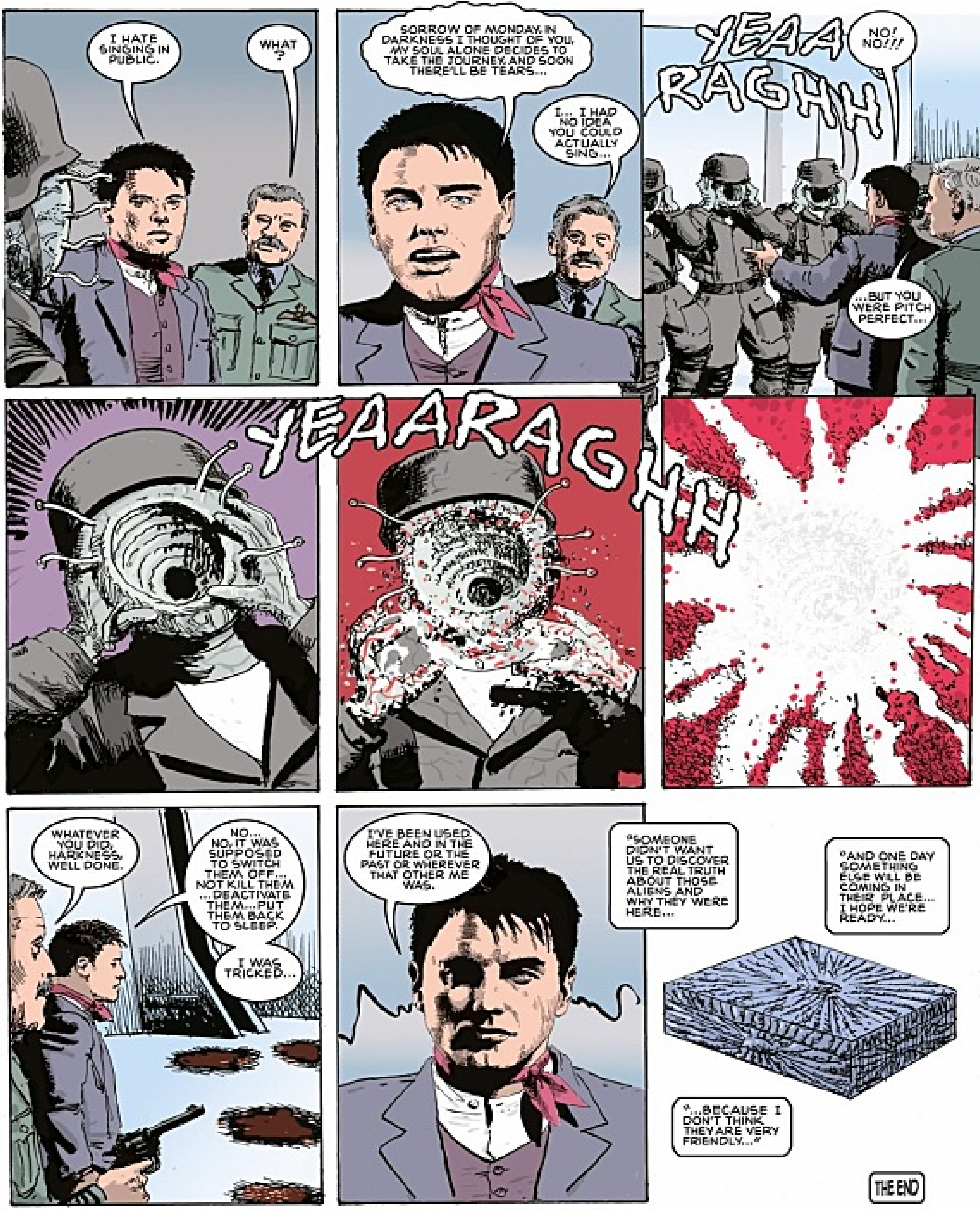

*I REALIZED THEY MUST HAVE REPLACED THOSE MUSICIANS EARLIER TONIGHT.
*ALL PART OF THEIR MASTER-PLAN TO INFILTRATE CARDIFF.
*THEY WERE MERCILESS. NO ONE WAS SAFE.
*BUT WHY WERE THEY HERE? JUST RANDOM SLAUGHTER, OR SOMETHING MORE...
*AND THEN I BEGAN TO THINK...
*...WAS IT ME?
*THEY SEEMED TO BE LOOKING FOR ME...BUT WHY?

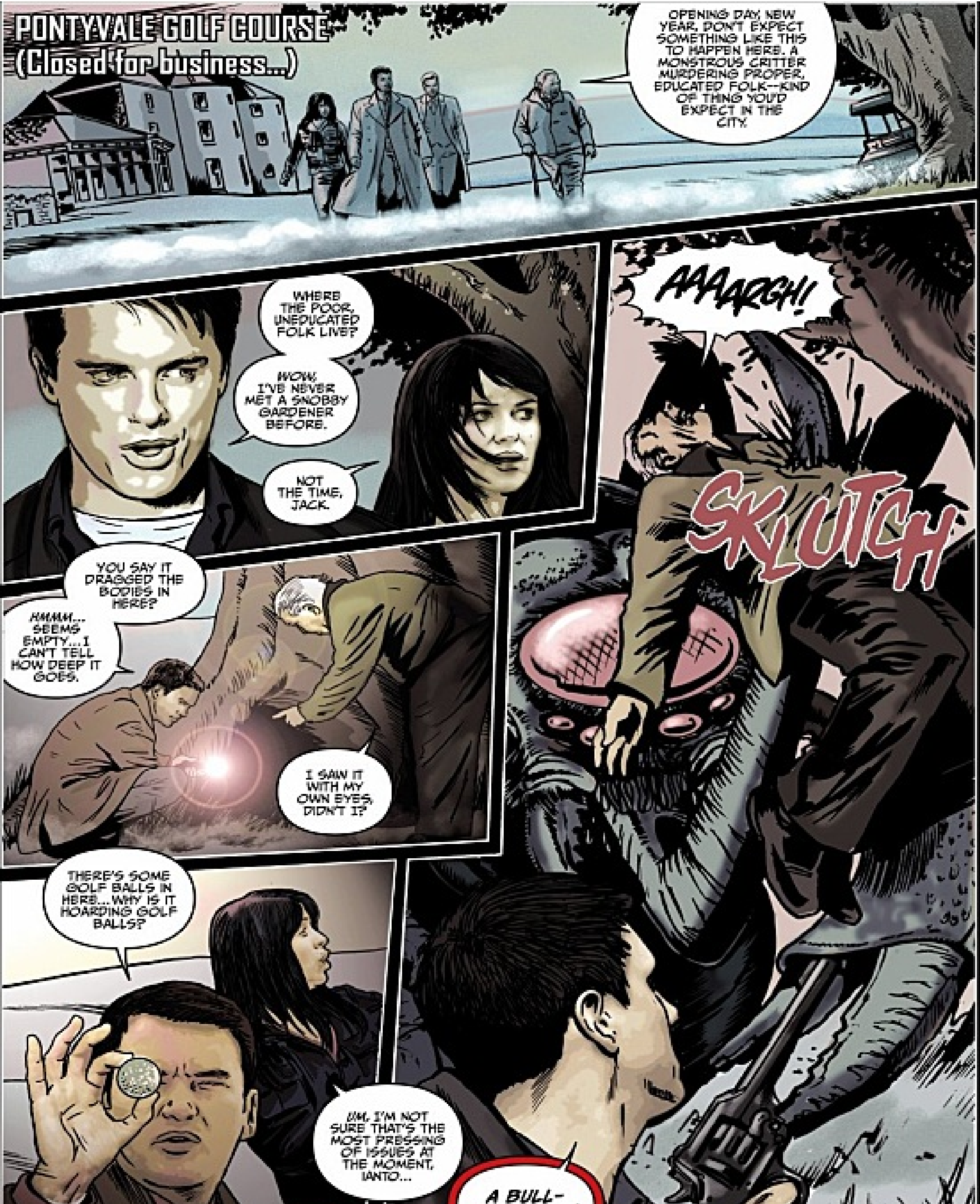

"THE COMMODORE'S NOT GOING TO LIKE THIS..."
CRASH!
"THEN AGAIN, THE COMMODORE NEVER LIKES ANYTHING I DO...
"MAYBE IF HE'D SORTED ME OUT WITH A GUN PERMIT, I WOULDN'T BE BRINGING THIS TO HIS DOOR..."
GREAT. TORCHWOOD CARDIFF GONE HOME FOR THE NIGHT.
THANKS FOR NOTHING, GUYS.

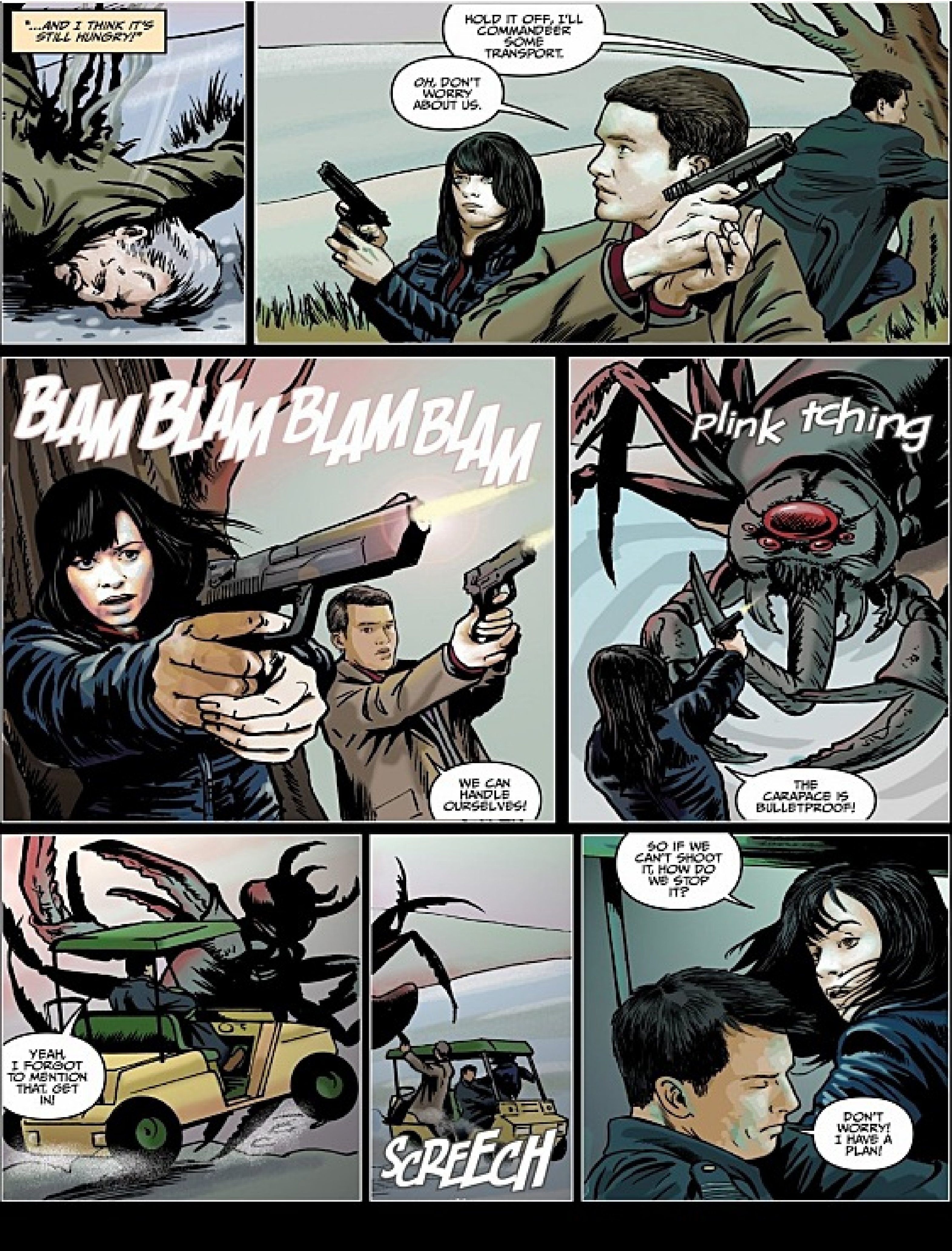

KERASSH!
A REINFORCED STEEL AND CONCRETE ROLLING DOOR--I KEEP TELLING THEM, BUT NO ONE LISTENS.
BUT I WANTED THEM TO GET IN, HARKNESS.
COMMODORE, THEY'VE BEEN KILLING THE PEOPLE UP TOP.
IT'LL BE BLAMED ON THE BLITZ AGAIN. WE'LL MAKE SURE OF THAT, JACK. YOU KNOW HOW IT WORKS.
WHAT'S GOING ON, COMMODORE?
THE'VE COME TO GET SOME PROPERTY OF THEIRS.
I DON'T LIKE YOU, "CAPTAIN" JACK HARKNESS. NEVER HAVE.
BEEN RUDDY EASY TO LET THESE FELLAS RID THE CROWN OF YOU.
I'M SENSING A "BUT"...
ONE THING TORCHWOOD TRAINING TEACHES YOU IS TO HAVE AN OPEN MIND. AS COMMANDER OF THIS BASE...
...IT ALSO GIVES ME ACCESS TO SEALED ORDERS...
...AND I HAVE TO OBEY THEM, REGARDLESS OF MY PERSONAL ...FEELINGS...
YOU HAVE "FEELINGS"? I LEARN SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY.
PACKAGE ON THE BENCH, "CAPTAIN."
JACK HARKNESS
NOT TO BE READ UNTIL THE EVENING OF AUGUST 7 1941

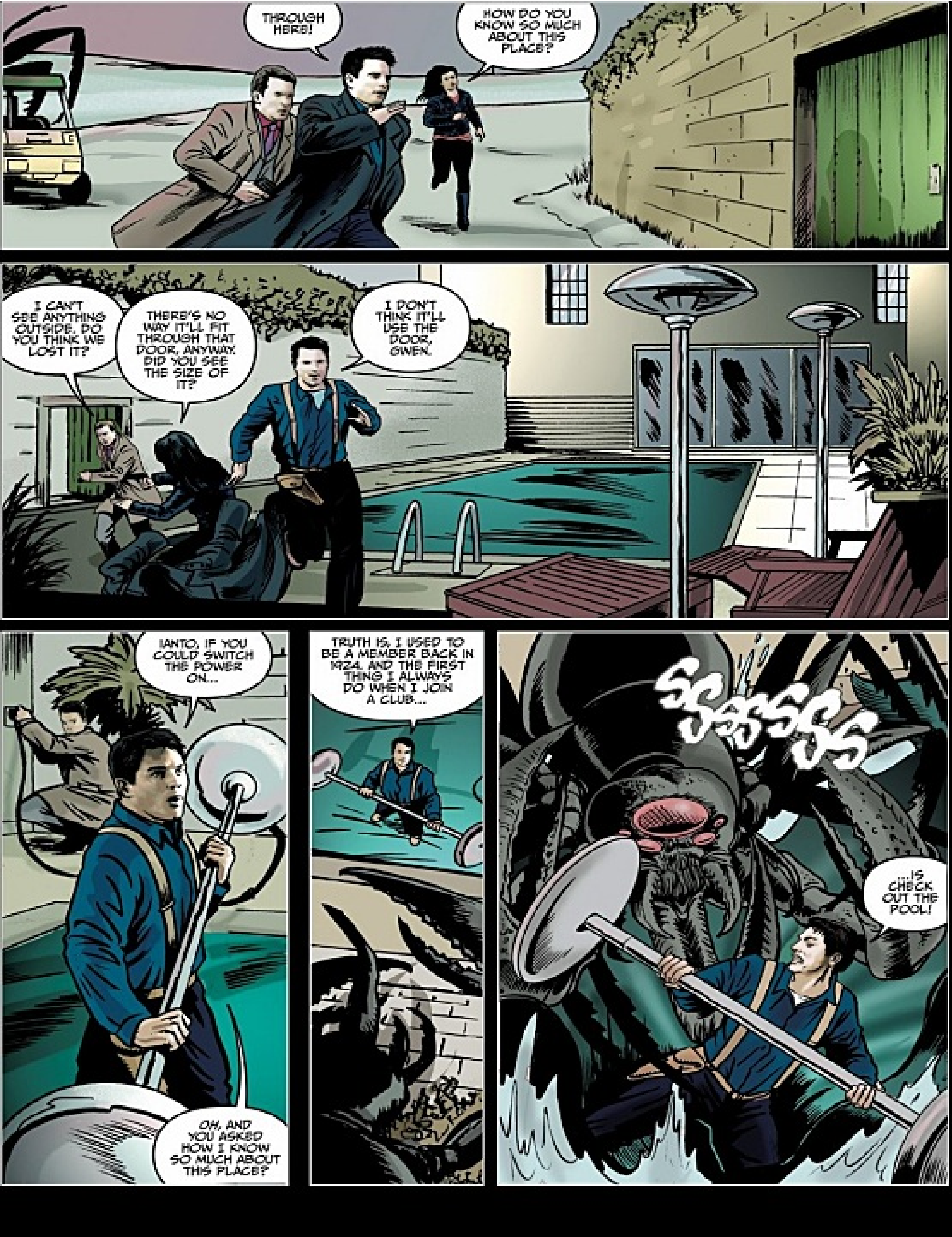

"DEAR COMMODORE. GIVE THIS TO JACK TONIGHT (HE'LL BE BRINGING GUESTS, TRY NOT TO SHOOT THEM). IT'LL SOLVE YOUR IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS. OH, AND BY THE WAY, BENJAMIN THE BAKER? BENT AS A 60 BOB NOTE. BUT I THINK YOU ALREADY KNEW THAT. LOTS OF LOVE, JACK. CALIFORNIA. KISS. KISS. KISS."
AND ?
I SUGGEST YOU OPEN THE BOX BEFORE OUR ALIEN CHUMS GIVE UP WAITING AND EAT US FOR SUPPER. OR THEY WORK OUT I CAN'T ACTUALLY SHOOT THEM ALL. BECAUSE THIS GUN ONLY HAS SIX BULLETS, AND THERE'S EIGHT OF THEM.
HMM...
OPEN SESAME...
SHOOOSHH
2067
"NOT SURE HOW I KNOW THIS, BUT SOMETHING INSIDE MY HEAD JUST TOLD ME THIS IS NEW YEAR'S EVE ON THE PLANET ZOO. IN RELATIVE TIME 2067. WOW.
"'COURSE, THE BANNER OVER THE BAR GIVES IT AWAY. IS THIS MY PAST OR FUTURE? THE AGENCY NICKED A LOAD OF MY MEMORIES, SO I'VE NO WAY OF KNOWING. BUT IT'S KIND OF COOL, ANYWAY."
SO IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SONG ?
IT'S A SONG WE ACCIDENTALLY LET FALL THROUGH THE RIFT YEARS AGO. IT'S BECOME FAMOUS ON EARTH – PEOPLE BELIEVE IT CAUSES ACCIDENTS, SUICIDES, THAT KIND OF THING. BUT IT DOESN'T – IT JUST ACTIVATES OUR SLEEPER AGENTS.

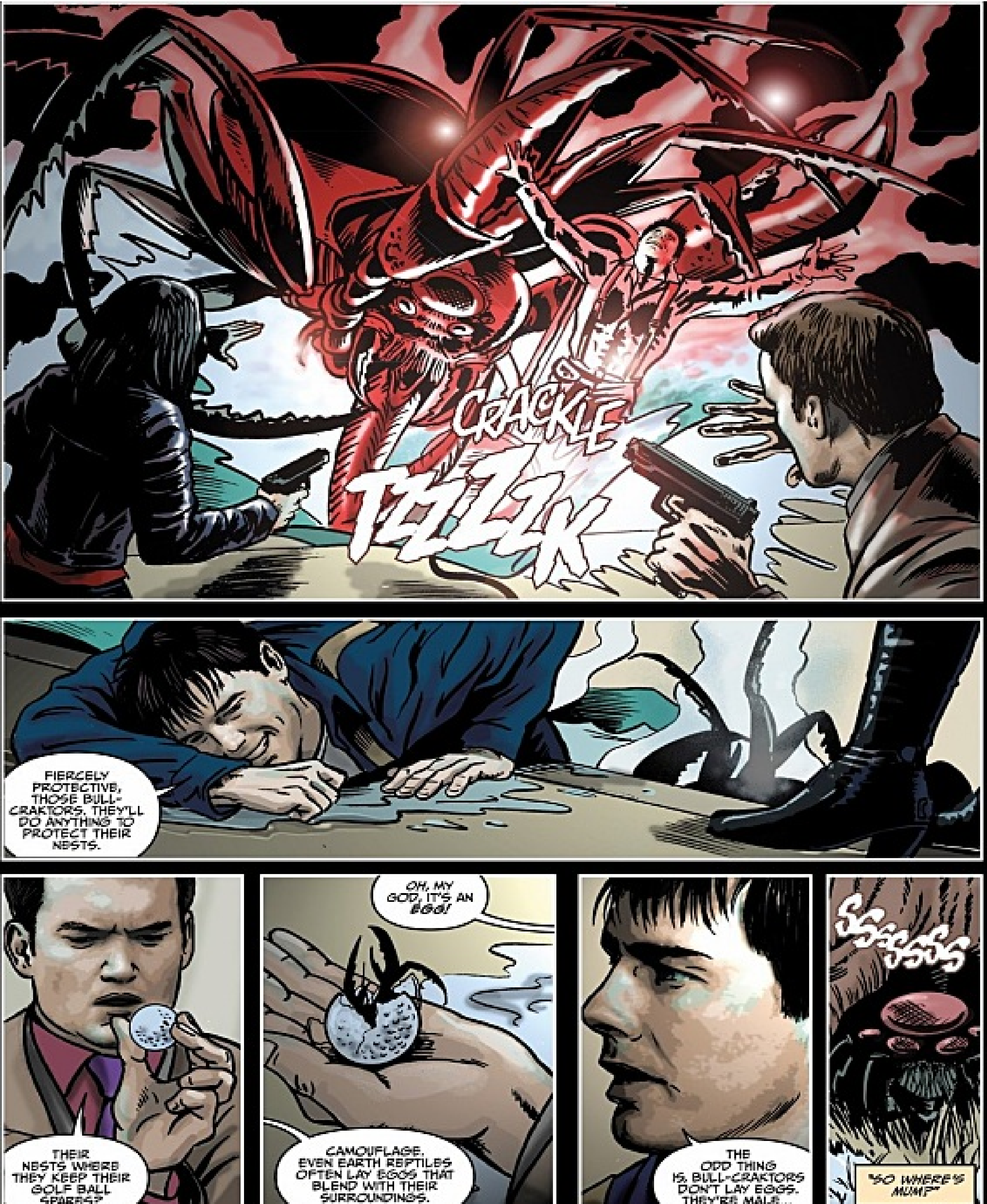

DARE I ASK YOU WHY YOU HAVE SLEEPER AGENTS ON EARTH?
KEEPING AN EYE OUT– IT'S WELL KNOWN THAT ONE DAY EARTH WILL HAVE A GREAT AND BOUNTIFUL EMPIRE THAT WILL CRUSH MANY OTHER RACES AS EASILY AS WE CRUSH A BUG. WE SAW IT AS ... INSURANCE.
I CAN'T GO BACK TO EARTH AND WARN TORCHWOOD. IT'LL CAUSE MORE THAN A FEW TEMPORAL HICCUPS.
USE THIS RIFT-SAFE THOUGHT SAFE.
"RIFT-SAFE THOUGHT SAFE"-- YOU GUYS SURE HAVE A WAY WITH WORD'S.
ALL YOU NEED DO IS TELL YOUR LOCAL TIME SELF TO SING THE SONG TO THEM A SECOND TIME WHEN THEY SHOW THEMSELVES ON AUGUST 7TH, 1941.
WE KNOW THEY DO THIS, BECAUSE THAT'S WHEN THE TIME FLUX BEGINS. THAT WILL SWITCH THEM OFF.
WHEN YOU SAY, "SWITCH THEM OFF..."?
IT WILL MAKE THEM SAFE, KEEP EARTH SAFE FOR GOOD. IT'S A SONIC FAILSAFE, THAT IS ALL.
ONE DAY WHEN EARTH IS READY, MORE PEACEFUL, AND MORE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THAT THERE IS MORE LIFE OUT HERE, THEN WE'LL GO BACK. I LOOK FORWARD TO THAT DAY. UNTIL THEN...
JACK? HARKNESS?
SPEAK TO ME!


I HATE SINGING IN PUBLIC.
WHAT?
SORROW OF MONDAY. IN DARKNESS I THOUGHT OF YOU. MY SOUL ALONE DECIDES TO TAKE THE JOURNEY, AND SOON THERE'LL BE TEARS...
I... I HAD NO IDEA YOU COULD ACTUALLY SING...
YEAA RAGHH
NO! NO!!!
...BUT YOU WERE PITCH PERFECT...
YEAARAGHH
WHATEVER YOU DID, HARKNESS, WELL DONE.
NO... NO, IT WAS SUPPOSED TO SWITCH THEM OFF... NOT KILL THEM ...DEACTIVATE THEM...PUT THEM BACK TO SLEEP.
I WAS TRICKED...
I'VE BEEN USED. HERE AND IN THE FUTURE OR THE PAST OR WHEREVER THAT OTHER ME WAS.
"SOMEONE DIDN'T WANT US TO DISCOVER THE REAL TRUTH ABOUT THOSE ALIENS AND WHY THEY WERE HERE...
"AND ONE DAY SOMETHING ELSE WILL BE COMING IN THEIR PLACE... I HOPE WE'RE READY...
"...BECAUSE I DON'T THINK THEY ARE VERY FRIENDLY..."
THE END


PONTYVALE GOLF COURSE (Closed for business...)
OPENING DAY, NEW YEAR, DON'T EXPECT SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO HAPPEN HERE. A MONSTROUS CRITTER MURDERING PROPER, EDUCATED FOLK--KIND OF THING YOU'D EXPECT IN THE CITY.
WHERE THE POOR, UNEDUCATED FOLK LIVE?
WOW, I'VE NEVER MET A SNOBBY GARDENER BEFORE.
NOT THE TIME, JACK.
YOU SAY IT DRAGGED THE BODIES IN HERE?
HMMM... SEEMS EMPTY...I CAN'T TELL HOW DEEP IT GOES.
I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES, DIDN'T I?
THERE'S SOME GOLF BALLS IN HERE...WHY IS IT HOARDING GOLF BALLS?
AAAARGH!
SKLUTCH
UM, I'M NOT SURE THAT'S THE MOST PRESSING OF ISSUES AT THE MOMENT, IANTO...
A BULL-CRAKTOR!


"...AND I THINK IT'S STILL HUNGRY!"
HOLD IT OFF, I'LL COMMANDEER SOME TRANSPORT.
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT US.
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
WE CAN HANDLE OURSELVES!
plink tching
THE CARAPACE IS BULLETPROOF!
YEAH, I FORGOT TO MENTION THAT. GET IN!
SCREECH
SO IF WE CAN'T SHOOT IT, HOW DO WE STOP IT?
DON'T WORRY! I HAVE A PLAN!


THROUGH HERE!
HOW DO YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT THIS PLACE?
I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING OUTSIDE. DO YOU THINK WE LOST IT?
THERE'S NO WAY IT'LL FIT THROUGH THAT DOOR, ANYWAY. DID YOU SEE THE SIZE OF IT?
I DON'T THINK IT'LL USE THE DOOR, GWEN.
IANTO, IF YOU COULD SWITCH THE POWER ON...
OH, AND YOU ASKED HOW I KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT THIS PLACE?
TRUTH IS, I USED TO BE A MEMBER BACK IN 1924. AND THE FIRST THING I ALWAYS DO WHEN I JOIN A CLUB...
SSSSSSS
...IS CHECK OUT THE POOL!


CRACKLE
TZZZZK
FIERCELY PROTECTIVE, THOSE BULL-CRAKTORS. THEY'LL DO ANYTHING TO PROTECT THEIR NESTS.
THEIR NESTS WHERE THEY KEEP THEIR GOLF BALL SPARES?
OH, MY GOD, IT'S AN EGG!
CAMOUFLAGE. EVEN EARTH REPTILES OFTEN LAY EGGS THAT BLEND WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS.
THE ODD THING IS, BULL-CRAKTORS DON'T LAY EGGS. THEY'RE MALE...
SSSSSSS
"SO WHERE'S MUM?"

THE END...?

REFLECTIONS

A NEW SHORT STORY BY JULIET E MCKENNA

ART BY MIKE DOWLING

Too much time to think. That was the problem with the night shift. It hadn't been so bad when there'd been someone to talk to, but now there was only three of them. And it was so quiet with the light columns dimmed and the warm humming of the computers lulling her into a snooze.

Gwen yawned and checked her watch. 5:15am. Another night with just her and the insomniacs awake. And the burglars and the TWOC-ers and any police chasing them, of course. She stretched her arms high over her head. After a week and a half with nothing to do, she wouldn't mind a high-speed pursuit around Cardiff, hitting the blues and twos.

A flicker caught her eye. A blip of Rift activity. Be careful what you wish for?

Gwen quickly reviewed the data. Only a small disturbance. So what was it? Something more interesting than lads nicking a car for joyriding.

Her hands moved across the keyboards, eyes scanning from screen to screen. CCTV? Radiation scans? Nothing?

Gwen expanded the search parameters. VHF wavelengths. UHF. ULF. She checked sensors for things she hadn't known existed before she came to Torchwood.

"Nothing?" She vented her frustration aloud.

She went back to the blip. Her eyes weren't playing tricks on her, but it was a very small disturbance. Gwen rattled off some reluctant keystrokes. Better try a diagnostic.

Watching the progress bar creep across the screen, she heard the noise of the lift from the plaza. She swivelled around. "Ianto?"

"You're expecting someone else?" Even at this ungodly hour, he was smartly dressed. His gaze fixed on her screen. "Or *something* else?"

Gwen grimaced. "Rift monitor says something came through, but I can't find any trace. I'm running a diagnostic on the system now."

Ianto studied the readouts. "I'll get us some coffee, then."

"Not for me," Gwen said quickly.

"Sure?" A shadow darkened his eyes.

"It'll keep me awake," she apologised. "It's hard enough to sleep in the day."

"Right." Ianto's flat tone told Gwen that she'd hurt his feelings.

She was too tired for this. "I'll leave this with you, yeah?" She went to fetch her jacket. "Till Jack gets in?"

She turned, expecting to see Ianto there. But he was busy in his cubbyhole with his coffee machine.

"Right," he called out.

Gwen scrubbed a hand across her face. Her own reflection in the glass partition must have caught her eye. "Bye then." She headed for the lift, pursued by the tantalising scent of Ianto's coffee.

That would probably tip the balance, if Torchwood ever got too much. Going back to police canteen coffee didn't bear thinking about. In the pre-dawn greyness, Gwen smiled as she headed for her car and home.

Rhys scowled at the radio as the traffic reporter bantered with the DJ. Why did they have to be so cheerful so early? He wiped condensation off the bathroom mirror. He never slept well without Gwen, and once he was awake, well, he might as well shower and shave, get clear of the bathroom before she got home.

Thank God she only had another two nights on shift. He lathered his face. They'd have a long lie-in at the weekend. Go to the pictures? Maybe have a meal out?

He drew his razor through the foam. As long as some nightmare from beyond a black hole didn't cock up another Saturday night. Leaving him at home with a takeaway while Gwen raced out to save the universe with Jack Bloody Harkness. Leaving him sick with fear. Lose her and his world really would have ended.

Rhys contemplated his reflection as he shaved. Solid, square, unremarkable. His mam might swear he was handsome, but he knew no one looked at him twice. Not like Captain Bloody Jack with his cleft chin and his movie-star smile. And that was before he opened his mouth.

Rhys couldn't remember the last time he'd thought up a snappy comeback. He sighed, rinsed his razor and shook off drops of water.

Gwen's key crunched in the lock. Despite himself, Rhys smiled. She'd chosen him over Jack and all those coppers who gave her the glad eye. Her work with Torchwood scared him silly, but being an ordinary police officer wasn't exactly safe these days either. He loved her, so he had to put up with it.

He reached out to open the bathroom door. "I'm nearly done if you want the shower."

Gwen called back something he didn't catch. He heard her open the fridge.

"Just a minute." Rhys turned back to rinse his face in the sink. There were spots of blood on the mirror. He'd cut himself. Damn.

He wiped a piece of toilet paper round his chin, but it came away clean. Glancing in the mirror, he frowned. He had no cut and the glass was pristine. But there had been red spots. He reached out –

"Morning!" Gwen slid her arms around his waist, hugging him from behind.

"Morning, lovely." Rhys turned and kissed her.

She pressed her cheek against his bare chest. "I'm so ready for bed."

"Really?" said Rhys, suddenly hopeful.

"Sorry, lover." As Gwen patted the towel round his hips, a yawn smothered her chuckle. "I'll be asleep before my head hits the pillow."

Rhys curbed his disappointment. "We'll have the weekend."

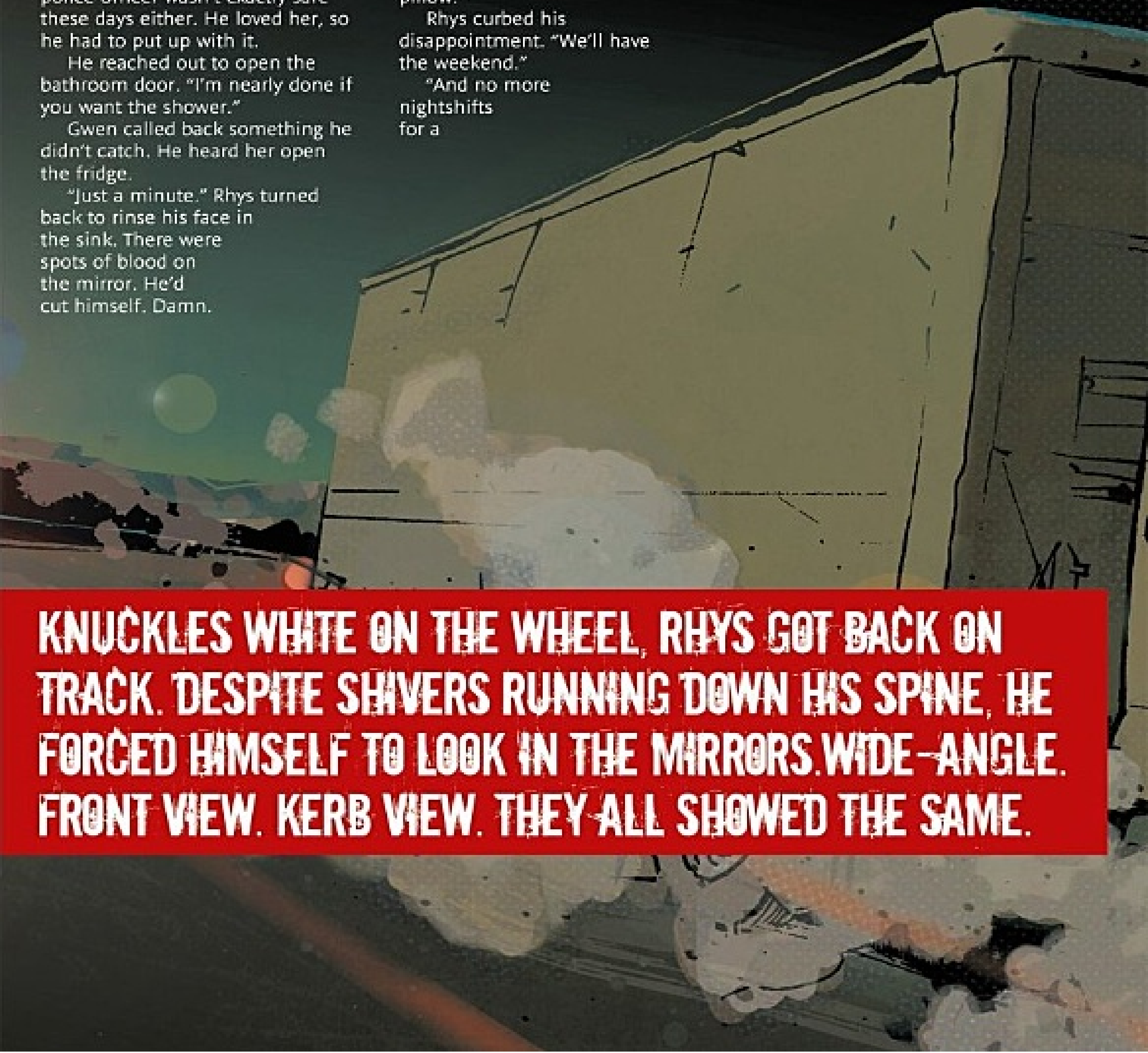
"And no more nightshifts for a month." Another yawn interrupted Gwen's relief.

Concerned, Rhys steered her to the bedroom.

"I don't like you driving when you're this knackered." He dropped his towel and reached for his clothes hanging from the wardrobe door. "You can always give me a ring. I'll come and pick you up."

But he turned to see Gwen already underneath the duvet. As predicted, she was fast asleep.

By mid-afternoon, Rhys had decided that cuddle was the best moment of his crappy day.



KNUCKLES WHITE ON THE WHEEL, RHYS GOT BACK ON TRACK. DESPITE SHIVERS RUNNING DOWN HIS SPINE, HE FORCED HIMSELF TO LOOK IN THE MIRRORS.WIDE-ANGLE. FRONT VIEW. KERB VIEW. THEY ALL SHOWED THE SAME.

Ten past three and he was getting nowhere with this VAT return, thanks to non-stop interruptions from Ruth and the telephone.

Which pile of receipts had he already totalled? The topmost sheets were all from Hywel Tyres, so that was no help. He searched the spreadsheet, but the number by the cursor didn't match either of the invoices. Where exactly had he got to?

Rhys pushed back his chair and sipped cold dregs of tea. It was too hot and stuffy in this office. No wonder his mind was wandering. Like when you're driving home and you realise you've been on autopilot half the way. Everybody does it.

Not everyone had been dosed with Retcon though. How many people had Torchwood dosed with that stuff? He'd noticed more newspaper headlines today. Another theory about dementia. Did they even know what it did ten years later? And now he was imagining blood on the bathroom mirror. What did that mean?

Rhys crushed the empty paper cup in his hand. He'd only had one amnesia pill. Gwen promised. Though it might be easier if he hadn't seen her tell such convincing lies for Torchwood in the past.

He remembered how easily she'd dealt with their families at their wedding. Happiest day of his life? Yes, and the most terrifying. He wouldn't mind forgetting that hideous Nostrovite masquerading as his mam. Just one tablet.

But then Gwen would have to keep lying. He'd stay ignorant as a pig in muck while she was risking her life.

Rhys hurled the mangled cup into the bin with a muttered obscenity and headed back to the invoices. At least that was a straightforward problem.

He heard Gwen snoring when he got back to the flat. He thought about getting into bed beside her. Maybe pick up where they'd left off?

No. He was unpleasantly sweaty after a long, sticky day. But a quick shower and his luck might be in. He headed for the bathroom.

The powerful spray washed away most of his bad mood. Humming as he stepped out to drip on the bathmat, he wiped his hand across the steamed-up mirror. There it was again. Red drops spattered across the glass. Rhys rubbed at them with his hand, then the towel. They didn't shift. It wasn't on the glass at all.

Was it mould between the mirror and the cupboard door? ▸

He opened the cabinet to check for any stains on the inside. Nothing. That was a relief. Mould was–

He yelled. Jumped back. As he closed the cupboard door, a hand had swept across the mirror. Not human but monstrous, with green scales and lethal talons. He stood, frozen, waiting for it to reappear.

It didn't. He forced himself forward to look more closely. He wasn't imagining it. There was a bloody smear across the other side of the glass. There was something inside the mirror!

"Rhys?" Gwen rattled the door, alarmed. "Are you all right? I heard you shout."

He moved back from the door so she could enter. "There's something bloody strange going on, Gwen."

Before he finished explaining, she was on her mobile. "Jack? I need you here."

Rhys saw her half-smile before she broke into Jack's chirpy reply. "Don't be daft! This is serious. It could be something to do with this morning."

"What happened this morning?" Rhys demanded. Gwen silenced him with an upheld hand while she listened to Jack. "Right." She snapped the phone shut and looked at Rhys. "Something might have come through the Rift." She gestured at the mirror. "I thought I saw something in a reflection at the Hub. Only I decided I imagined it."

"Right." He looked at Gwen, adorable with her tangled hair and that old Welsh Dragon t-shirt she slept in. "You'd better get dressed, if we're having company."

"And you."

Gwen laughed as he realised that Rhys was still dripping wet and naked.

RHYS FLINCHED AS THE CREATURE RAKED AT THE GLASS TAPE TORE AND SHARDS CLATTERED ON TO THE FLOOR. A SCALY ARM REACHED THROUGH AND RIPPED THE HOLE STILL WIDER.

No one was laughing after he and Gwen told Jack and Ianto their stories. "Damn! We've lost a whole day running diagnostics." Jack was pacing around their small flat. "How come we didn't pick this up?"

"Half the readings did," Ianto objected.

"And half of them showed nothing at all," retorted Jack.

Rhys was tired of all this. "Maybe something came halfway through?"

Jack turned, his coat flaring wide. "You could be right. It's come through just far enough to be stuck in a dimension so close we can see it in mirrors."

Rhys gaped. He hadn't been serious.

Ianto frowned. "But why Gwen's bathroom mirror in particular?"

"And what the hell does it want with Rhys?" demanded Gwen.

"Hey, it's a red-blooded alien." Jack's infuriating grin widened. "Who'd pass up seeing that body in the shower? You been working out?"

Now he was taking the piss. Rhys took an irate step forward.

"Red blood, right?" Ianto broke in. "So it's an oxygen- and carbon-based life form."

"I saw it at the Hub first," Gwen reminded them tartly. "It must have followed me home."

Rhys stepped back. He knew Gwen didn't like it when he got cross with Jack.

"So it's intelligent?" Jack mused. "Smart enough to be drawn to the Hub, definitely. Maybe it's trying to contact Gwen."

"How dangerous could it be?" Ianto looked at Rhys. "You said it had claws?"

"If it's stuck behind the mirror, we're safe enough. But that cuts both ways." Jack shook his head, exasperated. "If we can't reach it, how do we send it back?"

"Time for research," Ianto said ruefully.

Jack nodded. "You and me. Gwen, stay here. Maybe it is trying to contact you."

Rhys's mobile buzzed in his pocket. He glanced at the screen. Stevie from work. He took the call. What else could he do? Watch telly while Gwen sat on the toilet, keeping watch for monsters?

"What is it?" Jack demanded.

Now Rhys could hold up a hand and silence them all.

"He's what? That's bloody

ridiculous. Pissed, more like. Well, it'll have to be! Bye."

"Rhys?" Gwen looked at him, expectant.

"Ed Jones called in sick." Rhys went to the table for his keys. "There's a container needs taking to Fishguard for the overnight ferry."

"Isn't there anyone else?" Gwen objected.

"Not in Cardiff with enough hours to do the run tonight." Rhys knew Stevie was right. Start breaking the rules on rest-stops and Harwood's Haulage would be out of business.

"Okay." Jack nodded, dismissive, turning to Gwen. "We'll get back to the Hub. Call us if you see anything."

Rhys slammed the door as he left the flat. He'd been grateful for Ianto's earlier interruption, to stop him losing his rag with Jack. But sometimes, he just couldn't help it.

Given the day he was having, Rhys half-expected to be stuck in traffic all the way to Carmarthen. But the roads were clear. He dropped off the container trailer at the ferry terminal and quickly turned for home.

He was tempted to put his foot down. But that wouldn't be too clever. Upgrades to the roads around Haverfordwest were balanced by enough speed cameras to lose a driver his licence if he didn't pay attention.

Back on the motorway though, he let himself relax. Neath came and went and his phone still hadn't rung. Gwen would be fine. Even if whatever it was got loose, she had her gun. Though a firefight in the bathroom wouldn't exactly endear them to the neighbours.

He checked his mirrors, ready to pull out past some idiot bumbling along in the middle lane. His indicators should give the fool a lesson in lane discipline.

Rhys wrenched at the steering wheel. Forgetting he didn't have the weighty trailer, he nearly lost control of the lorry completely. Brakes squealed as he fought to stop the heavy HGV from turning the car ahead into a rollerskate. The whole cab juddered as tyre rubber smeared across the tarmac.

Knuckles white on the wheel, Rhys got back on track. Despite shivers running down his spine, he forced himself to look in the mirrors. Wide-angle. Front view. Kerb view. They all showed him the same thing.

The green-scaled creature glared back. Yellow eyes glowed, pupils cat-slit. Its breath steamed, needle-teeth filling its gaping mouth. Those scrabbling claws were leaving streaks of blood on the far side of every mirror. It was so desperate to reach him, it had torn the flesh around its talons.

Rhys slowed down, but he couldn't stop. There was no hard shoulder, and even if there was, he didn't fancy explaining this to some traffic cop. He fumbled for his Bluetooth earpiece. It took three goes before he could speak calmly enough for the voice recognition to realise who to call.

Her phone rang. Once. Twice. "Gwen?"

"All quiet on the Cardiff front." She was perfectly relaxed. "No sign of the Hooded Claw."

"It's here!" Rhys knew he sounded panicked and he didn't care. "It's bloody here and it's looking at me in the wing mirrors!"

"What–"

"I've got to get off the motorway." He saw a blue sign ahead. "I'll pull in to the next services, yeah?" His hands were still shaking but at least his voice was level now. "Get here as fast as you can. I'll handle it till then."

"Right. Love you." Gwen was gone.

Why had he said that? How exactly was he going to handle it? Rhys flinched as he looked in the mirrors. It was still there. Still frantic to attack him. Still unable to break the glass.

Rhys pulled up on the far side of the lorry park, breathing a little more easily. As long as it was stuck in the reflection, it couldn't do any real harm.

So he could get a cup of tea. That surge of adrenaline on the motorway had left his mouth bone dry. He felt faintly sick.

Rhys climbed down and locked the door. He saw the creature snarling in the mirror. "I'll be back to keep an eye on you, pal."

He hurried across the empty car park to the bright entrance of the motorway services.

The lights were an illusion. Everything was closed apart from the burger counter. A man was mopping the black-tiled hallway, singing tunelessly under his breath.

The heavy-eyed youth behind the counter straightened up. "What can I get you, mate?"

"Cup of tea, thanks. To go." Rhys reached for his wallet.

"What the–"

As the lad turned holding a steaming cup, words utterly failed him.

"What?" Rhys spun around.

The black night outside made a perfect mirror of the glass entrance door. Now Rhys could see the whole creature. It stood a head taller than him. More gorilla than man-shaped, with hulking shoulders and long arms, its muscular tail thrashed. Some nightmare lizard?

"Some advertising thing, is it?" Rhys was speaking before he realised it. "Some new film?"

"What?" The lad stared at him, wide-eyed.

Rhys nodded at the tea. "Let that cool down. I'll just go for a pee."

If that damn thing was still following him, he had to get it away from these two muppets. The fewer people needing Retcon when Gwen turned up, the happier he would be. He hurried out to the entrance hall and followed the sign to the toilets. He turned the corner past an array of arcade games and skidded to a halt.

There was a mirror ahead, floor to ceiling. The creature had its clawed hands spread wide, but it wasn't looking at Rhys. Its flickering tongue explored black and yellow tape, criss-crossing cracks where something had hit the mirror hard.

Rhys flinched as the creature raked at the glass. Tape tore and shards clattered on to the floor. A scaly arm reached through and ripped the hole still wider.

He bolted for the Gents. Behind him the sound of breaking glass was followed by the rattle of claws on tile. Rhys looked wildly around. Could he hide? Would the creature start searching the stalls or think he'd got away?

Too late. Its breath hissed behind him. He turned, struggling out of his jacket. Maybe he could foil its claws with the leather.

But the creature was hesitating in the doorway. It took a slow step forward, then it recoiled, tail lashing madly.

It wasn't mad at him. Rhys saw

GOING OUT INTO THE COOL NIGHT, RHYS SHIVERED. NOW IT WAS ALL OVER, HE FELT LIKE HE'D PLAYED A RUGBY INTERNATIONAL. GWEN TURNED TO HUG HIM. "WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?"

it snarl at the mirror on the wall. He watched the creature make a second attempt to enter. Then he looked back at the mirror. No, it wasn't his imagination.

As the alien tried to advance, Rhys saw it lurch. Clawed feet skidded on the black floor. Some force was drawing it towards the mirror. He realised it had no reflection. Instead, the mirror was sucking it in so forcefully, the creature visibly distorted for a second.

"Hah!" He shouted, triumphant.

The alien turned and ran.

Rhys's moment of victory died as someone yelled with fright. Another scream was cut short by sickening, moist, tearing noises.

He looked desperately round the bathroom. Was there anything to use as a weapon? Hand dryer. Condom dispenser. No chance. Could he get that mirror off the wall? Not without some tools. There was nothing to even break it with, to get a piece big enough to scare off the monster.

"Think, man!" he berated himself. His heart pounded as he desperately sought for a plan.

"We can help you!" A clip-framed poster for some car insurance mocked him. Then again, maybe they could. He prised the rigid plastic cover from the frame, tearing his fingernails.

He angled the sheet against the light. It was brand new. Maybe his luck was in. It would have to be, for this desperate idea to work. Steeling himself, he ran out to the entrance hall.

The burger lad had vanished. The hapless cleaner lay dismembered and disembowelled by his wheelie mop bucket.

So where was the alien? Rhys turned around, searching the entrances to the services' sweet shop, the two cafés and the display of tourist tat.

It leapt out from behind a rack of sweaters, jolly with cartoon sheep on them.

Rhys darted for the mop bucket, hurling it at the creature's feet. It skidded on the soapy water, but kept its balance, its screech derisive.

Then it fell. It tried to stand, but it was quickly sinking. With those bright lights overhead, the water on the black tiles made a perfect mirror. Caught right in the centre, the creature couldn't escape its pull. It was going down, deeper and deeper.

Rhys threw himself down like a forward scoring a try. He slammed the rigid plastic over the water, as the claws of the beast struggled to reach out. Yes! It was trapped. But now they were face to face. Claws scored the plastic. Breath misted its shine. He could feel it shoving, testing his strength. How long could he hold it? What if the water dried?

After half a lifetime, he heard the automatic doors opening.

"Rhys?"

Not midnight tourists, thank God. Gwen.

"You'd better have a plan, or a bloody big gun."

"It's okay." Jack and Ianto flanked him to hold down the plastic.

Gwen produced a hefty glass prism from a bag. "Lift it up – NOW!"

The three men sprang backwards. The creature's hand thrust up from the floor, gaining purchase on the drying tiles. Gwen slammed the prism down on to it. The claw was sucked straight into the glass and the rest of the beast followed in a slithering rush of scales.

"Total internal reflection!" Ianto stood up, looking regretfully at his wet and bloody trousers. "There's generally something useful to be found in the archives."

"There was a lad flipping burgers who won't want to remember tonight," Rhys realised aloud. "And the cleaner... Well, best close this place till you've sorted it all out. Say there's a diesel spill?"

"Already done." Gwen was buckling the prism into the black bag.

"Let's get that to the Hub. We can take the lorry and leave the other two here with the SUV." Rhys contemplated the bag. "What will you do with it?"

"When the Rift opens, we'll send it home." Gwen slid her arm around his waist. "It's just an animal."

"Yeah, so's a tiger." Rhys looked at the ravaged corpse on the floor.

"You seem to have all this under control." Jack stood there grinning at Rhys. "Got any orders for me?"

Rhys flipped up the mop with his foot and tossed it straight at him. "Looks like you're on clean-up, mate."

"Sir, yes Sir!" Jack ripped off a salute, smart as any Yank in those Sunday afternoon films that Rhys used to watch with his nana.

But Jack wasn't mocking him. Rhys saw respect in those mischievous eyes. He nodded. "Okay. Come on, Gwen."

Going out into the cool night, he shivered. Now it was all over, he felt like he'd played a rugby international.

"Oh, Rhys!" Gwen turned to hug him. "What were you thinking, taking it on!"

"I'm sorry Gwen, but someone had to," he protested.

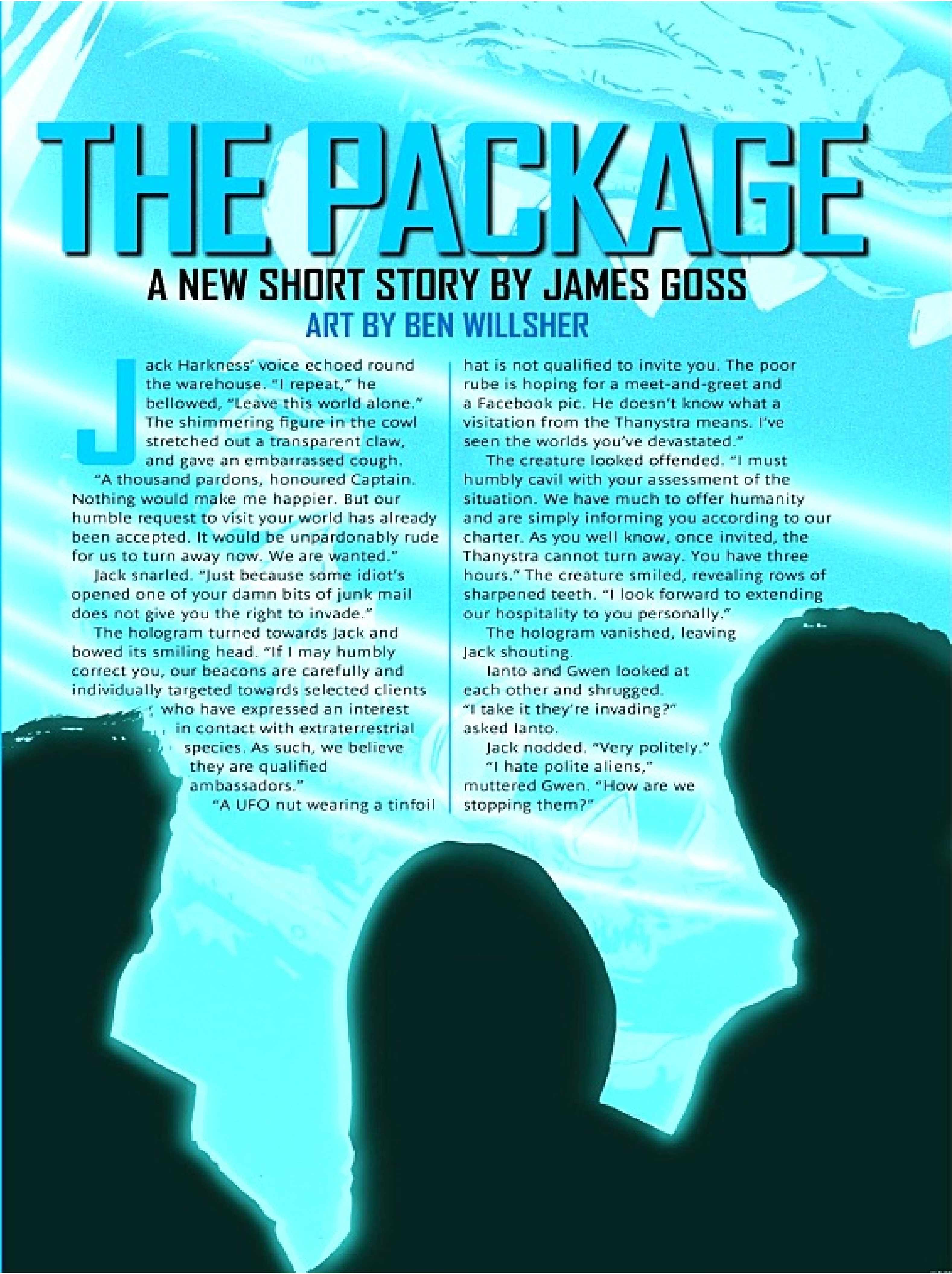
"And you did really well." She stood on tiptoe to kiss him. "I'm so proud. But it still scares me to death. If anything had happened... I couldn't go on without you."

Rhys held her tight. "Now you know how I feel."

After a long moment, he felt Gwen sigh. "Yes, I do. I'm sorry."

"Let's get that thing safely stowed in the Hub." He took her hand. "You and me, we need each other. But no one needs man-eating monsters from mirror dimensions, okay?"

Gwen laughed as they headed for the lorry park.



THE PACKAGE

A NEW SHORT STORY BY JAMES GOSS

ART BY BEN WILLSHER

Jack Harkness' voice echoed round the warehouse. "I repeat," he bellowed, "Leave this world alone." The shimmering figure in the cowl stretched out a transparent claw, and gave an embarrassed cough.

"A thousand pardons, honoured Captain. Nothing would make me happier. But our humble request to visit your world has already been accepted. It would be unpardonably rude for us to turn away now. We are wanted."

Jack snarled. "Just because some idiot's opened one of your damn bits of junk mail does not give you the right to invade."

The hologram turned towards Jack and bowed its smiling head. "If I may humbly correct you, our beacons are carefully and individually targeted towards selected clients who have expressed an interest in contact with extraterrestrial species. As such, we believe they are qualified ambassadors."

"A UFO nut wearing a tinfoil hat is not qualified to invite you. The poor rube is hoping for a meet-and-greet and a Facebook pic. He doesn't know what a visitation from the Thanystra means. I've seen the worlds you've devastated."

The creature looked offended. "I must humbly cavil with your assessment of the situation. We have much to offer humanity and are simply informing you according to our charter. As you well know, once invited, the Thanystra cannot turn away. You have three hours." The creature smiled, revealing rows of sharpened teeth. "I look forward to extending our hospitality to you personally."

The hologram vanished, leaving Jack shouting.

Ianto and Gwen looked at each other and shrugged. "I take it they're invading?" asked Ianto.

Jack nodded. "Very politely."

"I hate polite aliens," muttered Gwen. "How are we stopping them?"

Jack tapped frantically into his vortex manipulator. “We’ve got three hours to find that Invitation Beacon before they pick this world apart. Well, Gwen, you have three hours. Ianto and I are going to give it two-and-a-half, then spend the last 30 minutes naked.”

“Lovely,” said Gwen.

Jack waved an image around on his screen. “Here it is – this is what the Beacon looks like. It’s somewhere in Cardiff.”

“Oh,” said Ianto, and grinned.

“Good oh?” asked Gwen.

He nodded, beaming. “I’ve just bought that off eBay.”

The SUV tore through the early morning traffic, Ianto explaining rapidly. “Of course, I’ve set the computer up to bid on anything that looks extraterrestrial. Quite a lot of alien stuff gets sold quite innocently. It’s picked up some useful things, and loads of Transformers. Noticed the beacon a few days ago. It’s due to be delivered this morning, in fact.”

Jack kissed him without taking his hands off the steering wheel. “You’ve gotta love being alive, sometimes. The sun’s shining, traffic’s not too bad, and Ianto’s just defeated an alien invasion without even trying. I vote we knock off early.”

“Really?” laughed Gwen. “Let’s have a long lunch. Ianto, you get to pick.”

“Great,” said Ianto, “It’s just that I’d really like–”

“But not the Thai place,” chorused Jack and Gwen.

They parked the SUV in the Bay and made their way down to the Tourist Information office that disguised the entrance to the Hub. Jack had an arm flung around Ianto’s shoulder, and the three of them took their time as they breathed in the summer air.

“We’re due some luck,” Gwen smiled. “I can’t believe we’ve got a whole morning to pass without… you know… danger. Brilliant. I can catch up with Mafia Wars.”

“And I’ve got three Weevil victims in the freezer I’ve been meaning to dispose of,” agreed Ianto. “Good to cross that off the list.”

He unlocked the door to the office. And froze.

“Oh God,” he said.

He bent down and picked up something.

“The post was early.”

He held up a card: “We tried to deliver, but you were out.”

“You are kidding,” said Gwen.

Jack made a noise. It may have been a small scream.

“There’s a phone number on the back,” mumbled Ianto. “I’ll ring the depot.”

Jack snatched the card off of him. “There’s no time. Gwen – come with me. Ianto – stay here, man the CCTV, see if you can find the postman, think of anything.”

“And if that doesn’t work?” Ianto asked.

“Then think of something else.”

“How long do we have?” groaned Jack. The SUV was stuck in traffic on Penarth Road.

“Well,” Gwen squinted at the back of the card, “Apparently it can take up to 48 hours before our package is back at the depot.”

“I wonder if this is deliberate,” Jack sounded the horn. Several other people followed suit. No traffic moved. “Torchwood and the Royal Mail go way back. Not in a good way.”

“I’m sure, if you explain, they’ll be quite reasonable,” muttered Gwen. “I mean, they’re only the Post Office and you are trying to save the world.”

The sorting office was an ugly seventies building plonked unhappily on an industrial estate. The building looked as though it wished it wasn’t there. Something it had in common with the people queued up inside it.

Gwen and Jack stood in line. A dozen people stared listlessly ahead.

Jack had already tried jumping the queue, but had been hissed at by an old lady with a shopping trolley.

“This is ridiculous,” he whispered to Gwen.

“Hush,” she said. “Look, it’ll take 10 minutes tops, and if all goes well they’ll either give us the package or tell us where it is. Just relax.”

“I don’t queue,” said Jack, helplessly.

Gwen looked at him. “No,” she said, after a pause. “I don’t suppose you do.”

Ianto had four terminals on the go at once, trying to track who had delivered the parcel and when. An email popped up: *“Hello Teaboy83. Thank you for buying ‘Alien Cylinder’ off of me. I hope you enjoy your purchase. I noticed that the package has now been delivered and would be grateful if you could rate this transaction positively in your feedback asap and then I’ll do the same. LOLxxx!”*

Ianto replied. “Hello RuthIsOutThere – it’s not turned up just yet, but great to hear it’s on the way. Can I just ask, did you by any chance push any buttons on the Alien Cylinder? Just curious. Regards, Teaboy83”.

Ianto went back to the terminals. He’d found a Post Office van driving away and tracked it back to the depot on CCTV. The timestamp was an hour ago. The package was in the depot. Nothing to panic about. They’d be fine.

“I TAKE IT THEY’RE INVADING?” ASKED IANTO. JACK NODDED. “VERY POLITELY.” “I HATE POLITE ALIENS,” MUTTERED GWEN.

RuthIsOutThere had responded:

"Hey Teaboy83, thank you for your email. Please note the item was sold as "opened" and "used". I did push a button when I first received it. I uploaded a video clip of the results to YouTube. It was attached to the original auction. Did you not watch it? Looking forward to your positive feedback! :) Xxx"

Ianto groaned, and opened up the link.

On screen a cowled figure bowed into existence.

"Greetings. Thank you for activating the beacon. By doing so you have kindly agreed to your homeworld being visited by the Thanystra. We are most grateful for the invitation and look forward to embracing your culture, population and mineral wealth. If you would like to repeat the message, please press the red button again. If you would like to cancel the invitation, simply press the black button and we will, of course, quite understand."

The man behind the counter stared at Jack and Gwen.

"Hello!" beamed Gwen. "How are you?" The man just grunted and held out a hand. She passed him the slip under the glass. The man stared at the card briefly, and then looked up at Gwen.

"Got any ID?" he asked.

"Sure!" Gwen smiled even more brightly. "Here!" she handed over her driving licence.

The man glanced at it.

"Says Gwen Cooper."

"Uh-huh."

"This card is for Ianto Jones."

Bugger. "I'm collecting it for him." Big, big, big smile.

"I'm afraid you can't. Mr Jones has to turn up in person."

"It's very important. He's ill. Really, horribly, stickily ill. That's his medication."

"Well, he'll have to give you a letter."

"I don't have one. It's very important. Very, very important. You have no idea."

The man grunted. "The line's building up behind you, miss."

"Please," said Gwen.

"Forget it," snapped Jack and pulled out his gun. "Give us the package. NOW."

The queue behind Jack cried out. Several people screamed. A few backed away. Someone yelled "Nice one! You show 'em."

Jack ignored them all and trained his gun on the man behind the glass.

"Give. Me. The. Package."

"No," said the man. Yawning, he gestured to a notice: "This is a zero-tolerance area for violence towards our staff."

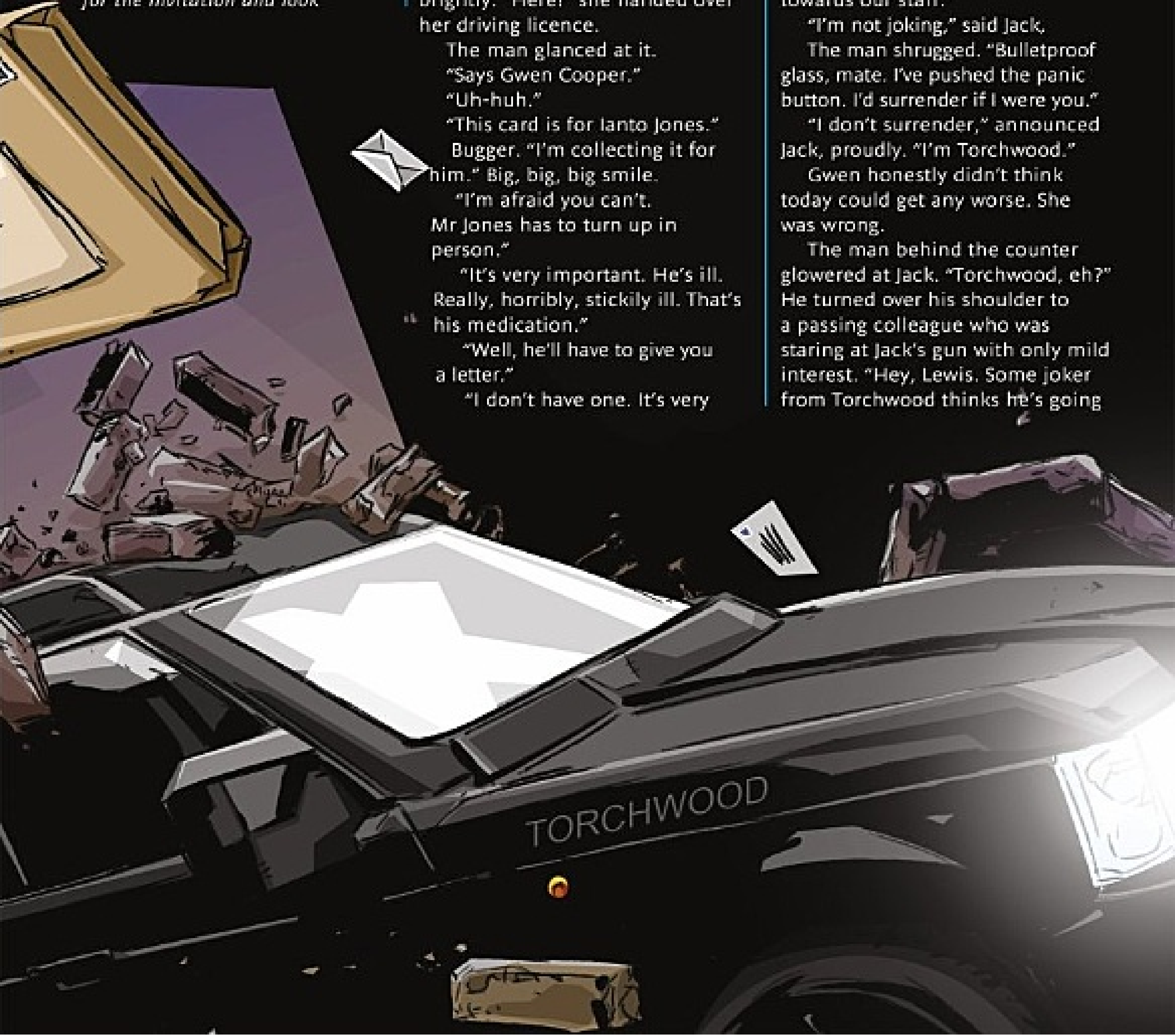
"I'm not joking," said Jack.

The man shrugged. "Bulletproof glass, mate. I've pushed the panic button. I'd surrender if I were you."

"I don't surrender," announced Jack, proudly. "I'm Torchwood."

Gwen honestly didn't think today could get any worse. She was wrong.

The man behind the counter glowered at Jack. "Torchwood, eh?" He turned over his shoulder to a passing colleague who was staring at Jack's gun with only mild interest. "Hey, Lewis. Some joker from Torchwood thinks he's going



to get some post by pointing a gun at me."

Lewis laughed. "Kettle's on, Roger," he said.

The man behind the counter nodded. "If you'll excuse me, I have important duties to attend to." He then raised his voice addressing the rest of the crowd. "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm afraid I'm closing the office due to the unacceptable behaviour of this member of the public." He walked away, leaving Jack and Gwen stood at the counter.

Jack stood there, gun still waving at the window. "I don't believe this," he said.

"Hum," whispered Gwen, and nudged him. "I think we're about to get lynched."

Jack turned. The queue behind him looked nasty. An old lady shook her head at him. "Shame on you," she said.

"Trying to save the world," muttered Jack.

The old woman sighed.

"Bloody Torchwood," she said.

Ianto had a new message from RuthIsOutThere. He ignored it. He was watching the YouTube video clip over and over again. It showed a pine kitchen table and some woodchip wallpaper painted peach. On the table was a small cylinder with an inviting red button. As the camera shook, a hand reached into shot as a man's voice called out "Ready now, Ruth. Play it again." The hand pushed a button.

A hologram of a familiar cowled figure sprung up against the woodchip. "Oooh," said the voice.

The cowled figure bowed.

"The humblest of greetings from the meagreness of the Thanystra to the mighty Earth Ambassador. We cannot help but notice that you have chosen to replay our earlier greeting. This action counts as a double confirmation of your extension of hospitality to our peoples in accordance with the Second Strata of the Shadow Proclamation. Rest assured, people of Earth, we are coming."

The figure bowed and vanished. The man's voice said. "Hardly 'Help me Obi-Wan Kenobi' was it?"

Ianto stared at the bits of kitchen caught in the background of the video – some pasta jars, a microwave, mug tree. It was all so ordinary.

Jack and Gwen stood in the abandoned lobby of the sorting office.

"Why don't they like you?" asked Gwen. "Do they have a particular reason?"

"Hey," said Jack, "Everyone loves me. It's just Torchwood they can't stand. Goes back a long way. Royal Mail, Torchwood: both run by the crown. Bit of rivalry. You know how it is. They misdirect our post, we blow up a few telegraph lines. Childish stuff, really."

Gwen rolled her eyes. "Couldn't you have sorted this all out last century?"

"Nope," said Jack. "We were busy. Now, I'm going to give this one final try."

He rapped on the bulletproof glass and prepared a big smile.

Roger shuffled into view, clutching a mug that said "World's Best Boss". He looked at Jack. "Hey-hey Lewis," he called over his shoulder. "He's still here. Alright mate. What's occurring?"

"Hello," said Jack. "I have about an hour left to save the planet."

"Save the planet, is it?" said Roger. "Heard that one before."

"In your depot you have a package which right now is the most important thing on this planet. Soon it'll be the only thing left on this planet. I am asking you to hand it over."

"Gladly," said Roger.

Jack blinked.

Roger shuffled away and came back a few seconds later. He was holding a small box wrapped with teddy-bear wrapping paper. "This it?"

"Yes," said Jack, exhaling with relief.

"Now, just show us some ID and paperwork and we're good to go." Roger smiled slowly.

Jack gritted his teeth together. "The traffic's gridlocked. Ianto Jones can't get here in time. But I'm his boss and I need that package."

Roger nodded. "I'm sure that's right." He shrugged. "Mind you, if he's in your office we can always arrange to redeliver it."

"Brilliant," said Jack. "Can you do that?"

Roger nodded. "Takes seconds, mate." Gwen noticed a cruel smile widening on his face. "Just take that card, log on to our website, and we will redeliver within 72 hours."

Jack opened his mouth. Then closed it again.

"Please," said Gwen, stepping forward. "Can I ask you one thing? Can you just open the package and press the black button on its side? Then you can do what you like with it."

"Important is it?" said Roger.

"Astonishingly," said Gwen. "Please. I'm begging."

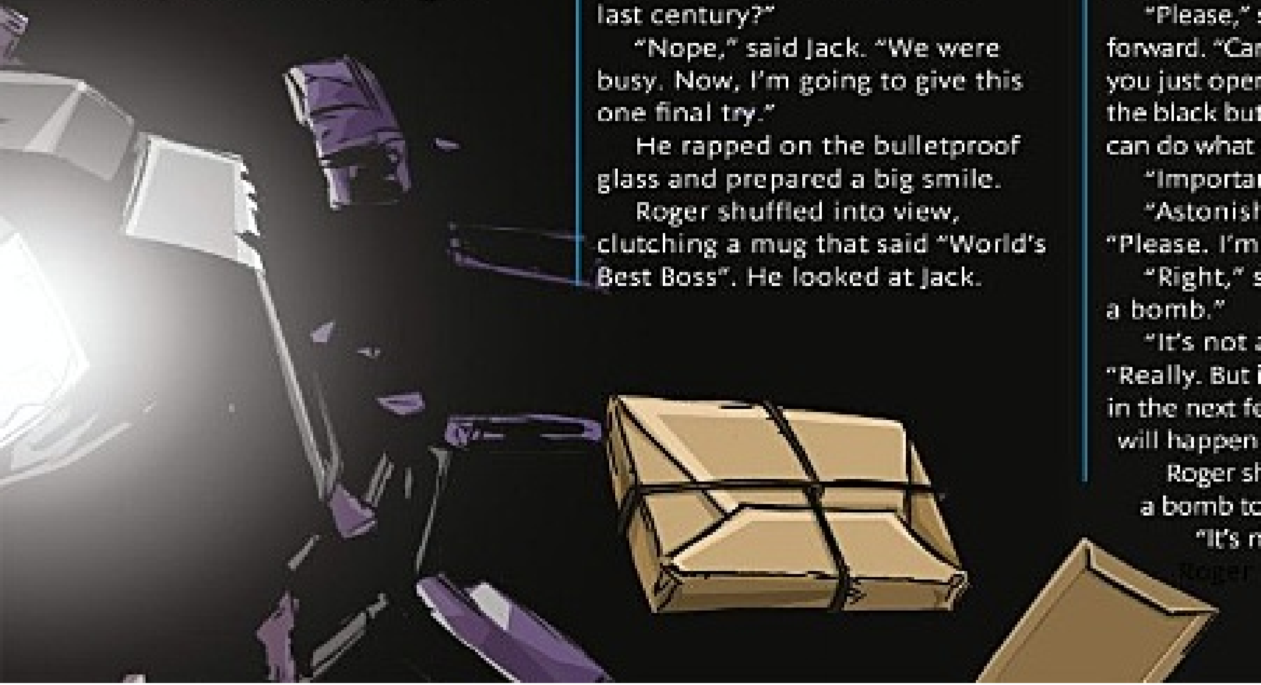
"Right," said Roger. "Sounds like a bomb."

"It's not a bomb," urged Gwen. "Really. But if that button isn't pressed in the next few minutes... Bad things will happen."

Roger shrugged. "Still sounds like a bomb to me," he said.

"It's not a bomb!" shouted Jack.

Roger held up a hand. "No



need to raise your voice, mate. This thing might go off. Also, I'd direct your attention to the sign." He pointed to a poster that read, "This uniform doesn't hide a thick skin. Please be polite." Roger wagged a finger seriously. "Bit of respect. Bit of hush. Thank you." He turned away and bellowed, "Hey Lewis, this thing's a bloody bomb!"

Lewis shuffled into shot. "Crikey man, what are we going to do?" he said, gently taking the package off his colleague.

"Early lunch?" suggested Roger.

"They've what?" said Ianto.

"Gone to lunch."

"So even if I come across town...?" "Nope. Forget it."

"What are you going to do?"

"We're going to try breaking in."

"Right. Is that wise?" Ianto stirred his coffee and looked worried. "I mean, they are the Royal Mail."

"Ianto, there's 40 minutes left. If you know another way to get into Cardiff's main sorting office, then I'd love to hear it."

Jack hung up. He had gone into his "Don't argue with me, I'm a hero" mood. Which was all very well, Ianto supposed. He decided to ignore yet another email from RuthIsOutThere. There were noticeably fewer kisses on it.

He looked around the Hub and suddenly had a very good idea.

Jack and Gwen sat in the SUV. It was parked outside the sorting office. The car park was empty. Gwen put down her phone. "Right," she said, her voice tired. "I've had a word with Andy. He's made sure the bomb squad aren't coming. Neither are the police to arrest two terrorists. Though he's said some community support officers might be along in an hour with some forms."

"Fine," snapped Jack, "The world won't be here by then."

Gwen slumped in her chair. It had started to rain. Jack turned on the windscreen wipers, and Gwen glumly watched them wave across the window like two blue halogen wands.

"Peppermint?" said Jack, fishing around for some on the dashboard.

"No thanks," said Gwen. "What are we going to do?"

Jack pointed at the sorting office. "We're breaking in."

"How are we going to do that?"

"Really," said Jack, "Have a peppermint. Natural oils. They're calming and they're good for car sickness."

"But I don't feel–"

And then Jack put his foot down on the accelerator.

Only Jack knew where the Torchwood SUV came from. Toshiko had been convinced that much of it was custom engineered in Japan. Owen had bragged that it had probably been fitted out in a shed in Reading that built monster trucks. Gwen had noticed the appalling number of miles it did to the gallon and been very glad Rhys had never got to drive it.

The SUV was solid. Very solid. It had been shot at, set on fire, and once a fairly small dragon had landed on it.

The SUV sped across the car park, accelerating at quite a marvellous pace. After a few seconds it ploughed through the wall of the sorting office, scattering a mixture of concrete and drab coloured brickwork.

It came to a halt. Dust clouds billowed around it and rain was already beginning to pour in from outside.

A door opened.

Gwen clambered out, already swearing at Jack.

Jack climbed out smoothly and arched an eyebrow. "You kiss Rhys with that mouth?" he asked.

"Let's find the bloody thing." said Gwen.

Alarms were ringing. Jack clicked a silver button in his pocket and silenced them.

"Yeah. Where should we start?"

They looked around them. They were surrounded by parcels and post and bricks and rubble. There'd probably been a lot of order. And then Jack had driven into it.

"Woah," said Gwen. "It's like you've ram-raided Santa's grotto."

"Not for the first time," said Jack. "Let's start over here."

They searched for a few minutes. Gwen had a mounting sense of panic.

"How long do we have?"

"Long enough," said Jack. He picked up a small pile of catalogues, scanned through them briefly, then threw them to one side.

"What happens if we fail? I mean, the end of the world, obviously, but how exactly?"

Jack looked evasive. "Some people say the world will end in fire, some people say the world will end in ice... Really though, if the Thanystra get their hands on it, it will be more like a closing down sale. They'll sell off everything that's valuable – minerals, water, oxygen, genetic tissue, and then move on."

"And the people?"

"Genetic tissue," repeated Jack. "Anyone they can't sell off gets left behind. But there'll be no oxygen, water or ground to stand on, so I doubt it'll be a problem for long."

"Right," said Gwen. She leafed through some envelopes. "This isn't getting us very far."

A rumble shook the building.

"What was that?" demanded Gwen.

Jack looked up at the ceiling. "I don't know. I don't think I've done any structural damage."

"It sounded like a bloody train going through." said Gwen. "Could the Thanystra be here already?"

"They wouldn't dare to turn up early. I mean, I don't think they would..."

Another noise cut their conversation short. Closer, metallic. Something approaching.

"This way," said Gwen. Down a corridor of pigeonholes with a door labelled 'VAULT'.

"Oh," said Jack. "Good call."

They made short work of the vault door, and in no time it swung open.

"Hello," said Ianto, covered in soot.

Jack blinked. "I'm surprised," he said, "More surprised than when you wore the–"

"Hello Ianto," Gwen said quickly.

"Hello," repeated Ianto.

"How are you here, Ianto?" asked Gwen.

"Hello," repeated Ianto. He shook his head. "Sorry," he said. "Knocked it getting in. Bit of concussion. Hello."

"How did you get in?" asked Jack.

"Railway," said Ianto. "The underground railway that used to link the various Torchwood bases. As you know, it fell into disuse after the... ah...."

Jack coughed.

"Anyway, no longer used. But the Royal Mail had its own transit tunnels, too. The one that links this sorting office to the main depot ran right alongside the Torchwood one for about a quarter of a mile. The Torchwood tunnel is so derelict now, it only took one good whack with a sledgehammer and I was in."

"But how on Earth did you get here so quickly?" asked Gwen.

"The mail cars are open and automated. I just hitched a lift in the right direction. At the end of the track, there's a lift up to the main building, and another one just marked 'VAULT.'

"Hard to resist a vault, isn't it?" said Jack. "So what's in there?"

"It looks like this is where Torchwood's post gets stored. By the look of it... they've been holding stuff back for years." Ianto held up an embossed card. "Jack's missed out on a knighthood."

"And the package?" said Gwen.

Ianto pointed to a small box. "I think that's it."

"Brilliant," said Jack. "Time to end this."

Jack unwrapped the package, revealing a small object with a red and a black button. The red button was flaring ominously. "It's getting warm," said Jack.

"Then push the button," urged Ianto. "Actually, I think I might just have a sit down."

"Right," agreed Gwen. "Only..."

"Yeah..." said Jack, his hand hovering over the button. "It's too simple, isn't it?"

He turned back to Gwen. "How long do we have?" he asked.

"Quarter of an hour," she said. "We could take the train...""

They made it back to the Hub with moments to spare. Jack pushed the black button. The cowled figure sprang back into life. The hologram took in its surroundings.

"Many warm and beneficent greetings to you, Captain Harkness." It bowed. "I take it this is Torchwood?"

Jack nodded. Gwen and Ianto stood behind him. Their arms were folded.

The figure held up a bony hand, and for a second there was a flash of skeletal teeth. "I must just point out that, most unfortunately, you appear to have pushed the black button."

"Yup," said Jack. "The one that means Get Off This Planet."

"Ah," the creature steepled its hands. "If I may correct you, there appears to have been some... ahem... slight error in the labelling. It actually doubly confirms dominion and assigns us all rights in perpetuity to the territory our beacon occupies. Most unfortunate that it isn't more clearly labelled. You are, I'm afraid, not the first species to select that option. Rest assured, any feedback you may wish to give me about this will be passed on to the correct authority." Somewhere inside the cowl, a bony smile spread.

"Uh-huh," said Jack. "No, trust me, you're welcome to your territory."

"Indeed? You are most, most generous to the Thanystra." The head tilted to one side.

"We feel honour-bound to accept your kind hospitality."

The hologram flickered, and light started to spill out around it. "In fact, why don't we just step through now and claim our prize?"

"Oh dear," said Jack. "Are you sure you want to?"

The figure nodded, starting to solidify. "Goodness yes. It's a sealed contract. We can't back out. Nor would we want to. We are very, very hungry."

"PEOPLE SAY THE WORLD WILL END IN FIRE OR ICE. BUT IF THE THANYSTRA GET THEIR HANDS ON IT, IT WILL BE MORE LIKE A CLOSING DOWN SALE."

"It's just..." Jack shrugged.

"Nothing," said Gwen. "It's been a bad week. We're quite happy to be devoured."

"End it now," agreed Ianto.

For a faceless creature made of bones and teeth, the Thanystra looked surprised. "As you wish..." It stepped forward. And hovered in mid-air.

"You'll excuse me for asking, but where am I?"

"The Rift," said Jack. "You're not in the Hub, but a bubble at the heart of the Rift Manipulator. Oh.... Did I not make that clear?"

"I don't understand," said the Thanystra.

"It's all yours. You now own the entire Rift. Ianto, can you shut down the manipulator and leave these guys to it?"

"Of course. It's, ah, not that stable, though, sorry," said Ianto.

"But very roomy," said Gwen.

And then Ianto pushed a button, and the Thanystra vanished.

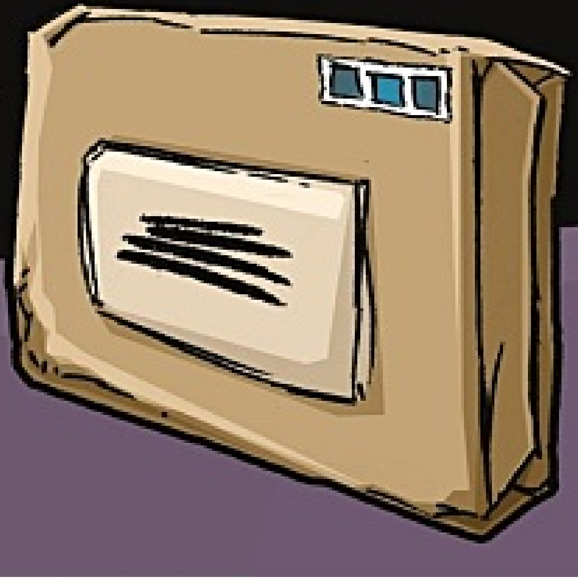
"Oh," said Jack, "I had a whole 'Return To Sender' thing I was dying to get in."

"That's just banter," said Ianto. "And besides, you've got places to be as well."

"Is that so? And where would you like me, Mr Jones?"

"The Post Office depot," said Ianto with a grin. "I think you should go and be nice to the Royal Mail."

NOTE: Shortly after the events of this story, RuthIsOutThere left negative feedback for Teaboy83. "Buyer didn't rate the transaction quickly enough and asked too many questions," she said. "After all, I have better things to do with my time."



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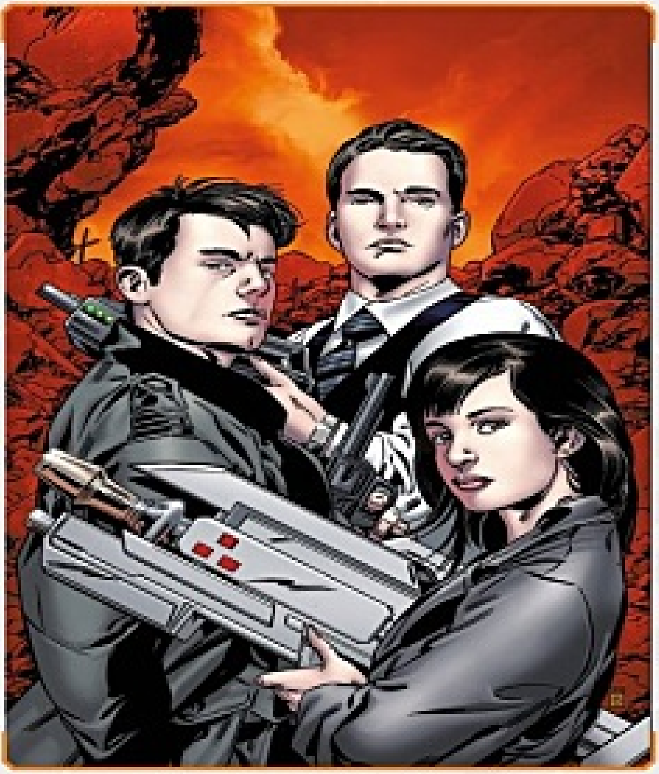

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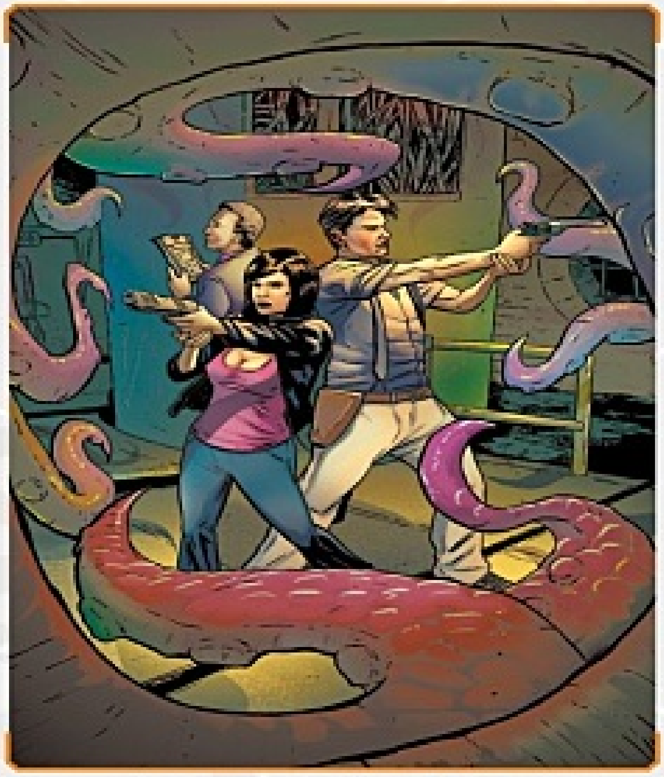

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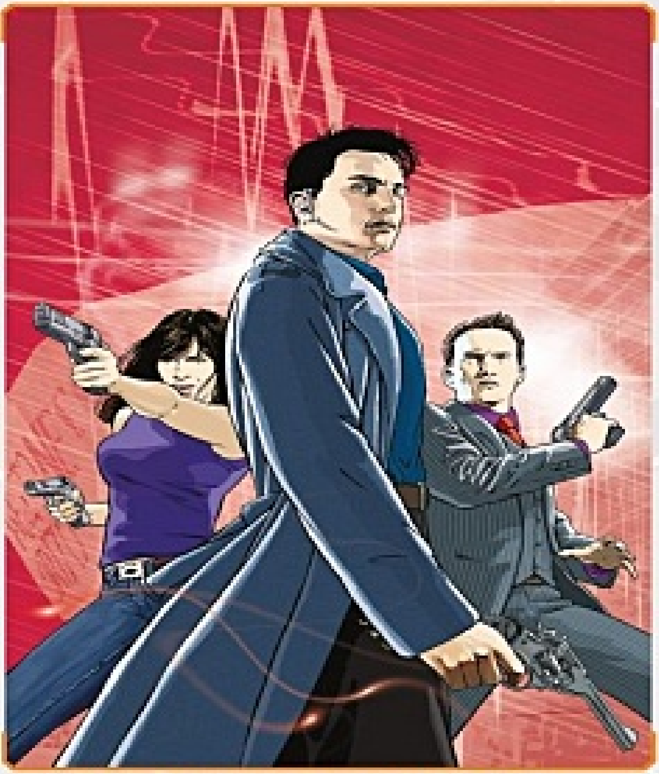

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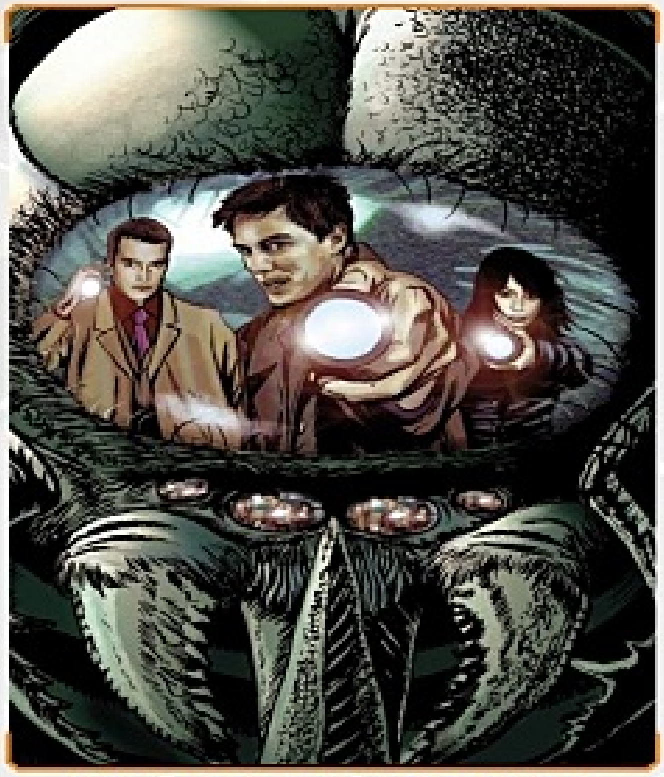

'MA & PAR' COVER
BY BRIAN WILLIAMSON

WRITER BIOS

WRITERS

Gary Russell
Gary Russell is a former script editor for *Doctor Who* and *Torchwood*, and former producer for Big Finish Productions. He has written and directed numerous *Doctor Who*-related Big Finish audio dramas, and written *Doctor Who* and *Torchwood* novels.

Nick Abadzis
Nick Abadzis is a comic book writer and artist who is probably most famous for writing and penciling the Eisner Award-winning graphic novel *Laika*. Other work includes *Hugo Tate*, *2000 AD*, *Deadline*, and *X-Men*.

Paul Grist
Paul Grist is a British comic-book artist and writer whose work includes the original creations *Kane* and *Jack Staff*, *Judge Dredd* for *2000 AD*, and *St. Swithin's Day* with Grant Morrison for Trident Comics.

Roger Gibson
Roger Gibson is a comic book writer, artist, colorist and letterer, whose other work includes *Gravestown* and *Harker*.

Oli Smith
Oli Smith is a writer who has written for various aspects of the 'Whoniverse', including many *Doctor Who Adventures* stories for BBC Magazines, two *Doctor Who* novels, audio stories and games, plus content for the official *Doctor Who* website.

James Goss
James Goss has written for the *Torchwood* and *Doctor Who* Big Finish audio stories, and is also a producer for Big Finish. Other work includes novelizing the Douglas Adams-penned scripts for *Doctor Who* stories *City of Death* and *The Pirate Planet*. He also commissioned the *Doctor Who* animated stories *Scream of the Shalka* and *The Infinite Quest*.

Juliet E. McKenna
Juliet E. McKenna is a novelist and short story writer whose novels include the fantasy series *The Tale of Einarinn*, *The Aldarbreshin Compass*, *The Chronicles of Lescari Revolution* and *The Hadrumal Crisis*.

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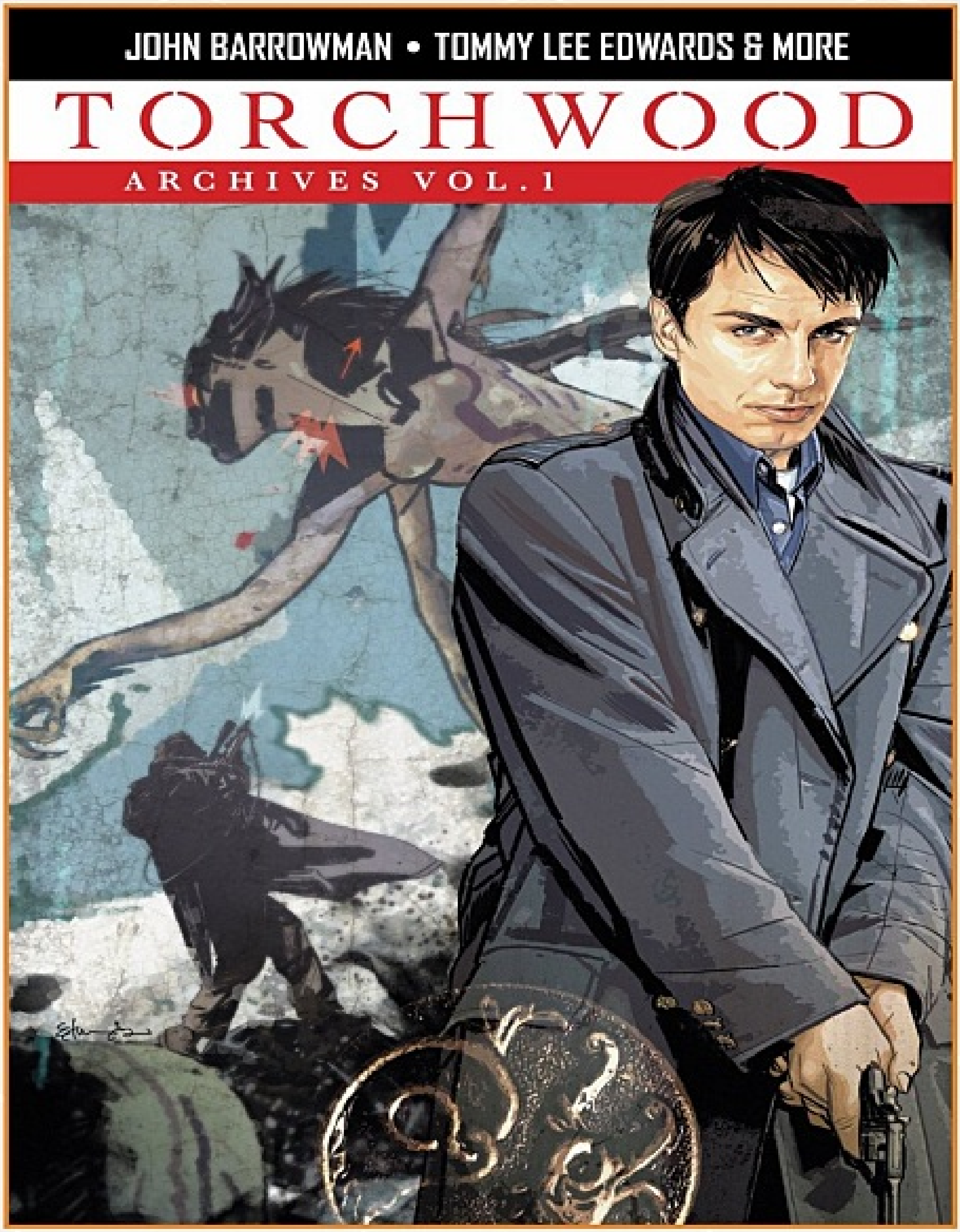
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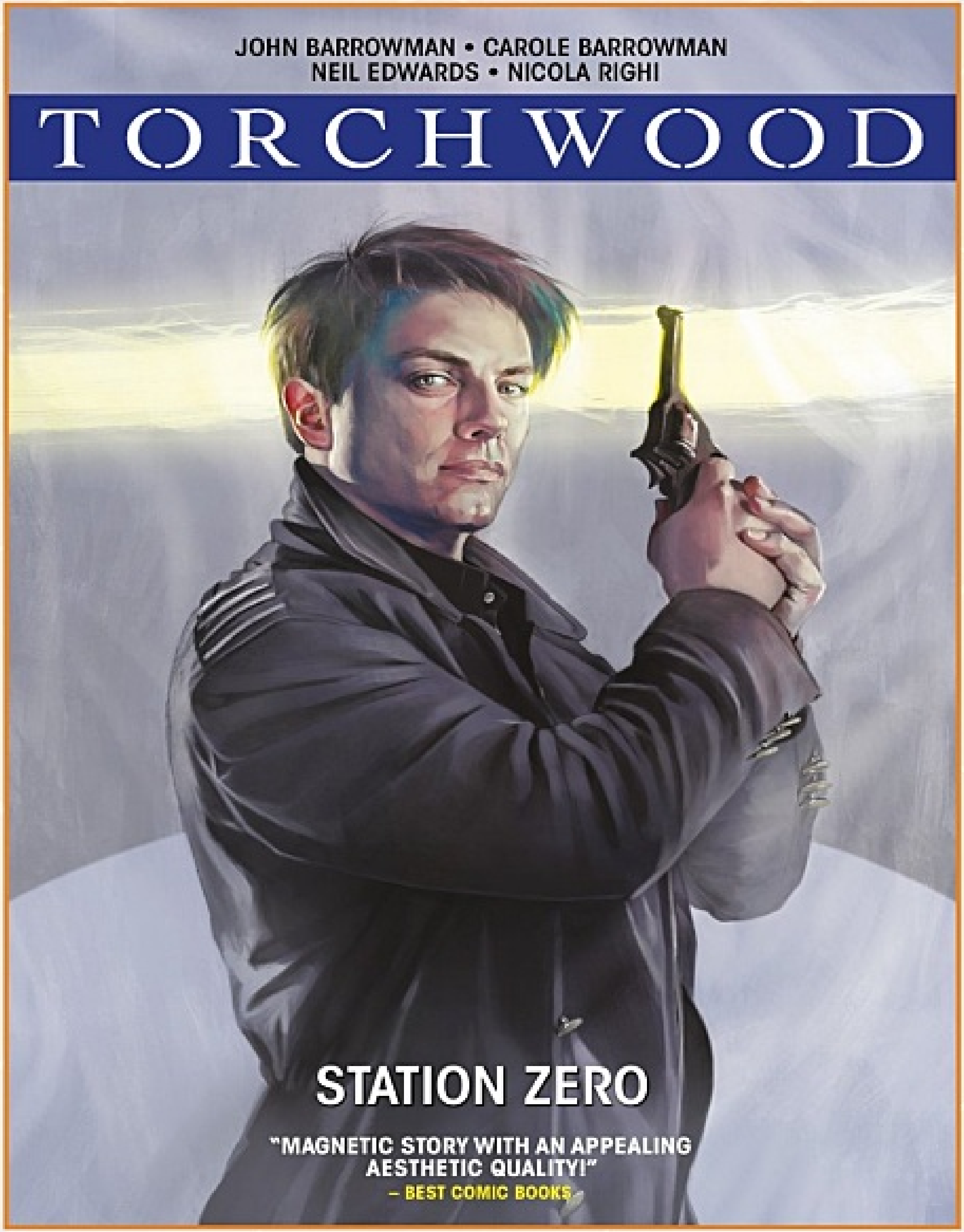
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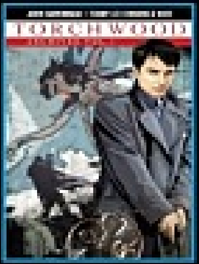

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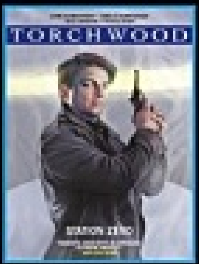

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